

EXPLORATION OF THEMES EVOLVING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF THIRD
CULTURE KIDS

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	i
List of Tables	vii
List of Appendices	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Issues in the Lives of TCKs	3
Change.	3
Relationships.	4
Worldview.	4
Cultural orientation.....	4
Reentry.....	5
Sense of home.....	6
Coping with mobility.....	6
Identity development.	7
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Questions	9
Glossary of Terms	10
Limitations of the Study	10
Summary	11
Chapter 2: Literature Review	12
Mobility and Change.....	15
Rootlessness and restlessness.	16
Loss and grief.	17
Belonging	20
Academic and Career Factors	21
Reentry	22
Age.....	23
Relationships.	24
Identity Formation.....	24

Cultural influence on identity.	26
Multiracial identity.	28
Ethnic/Cultural identity.	30
Appropriateness of Methods	31
Chapter 3: Method	33
Overview of Methodology	33
Participants	34
Participant selection procedure.....	35
Procedure.....	36
Identifying and training of research team.....	36
The interview.....	37
Transcription of interviews.....	39
Data Analysis	40
Qualitative analysis.....	40
Quality Control.....	44
Credibility.....	44
Transferability.	44
Dependability.....	45
Confirmability.	45
Reflexive writing.	45
Chapter 4: Results	46
Participants	46
Participant 1.....	46
Participant 2.....	47
Participant 3.....	47
Participant 4.....	47
Participant 5.....	48
Participant 6.....	48
Participant 7.....	48
Participant 8.....	48

Participant 9.....	49
Participant 10.....	49
Participant 11.....	49
Participant 12.....	50
Participant 13.....	50
Participant 14.....	50
Participant 15.....	51
Primary Researcher	51
Themes	51
Theme 1: Broader understanding of the world and the differences of people.	54
Theme 2: Developing a support system of genuine relationships based on support and understanding.....	56
Theme 3: Development of an identity that integrates experiences and cultures.	59
Theme 4: Feeling misunderstood, isolated, and different.	62
Theme 5: Experience resulted in opportunities and skills sets that are not traditional in the passport country.....	65
Theme 6: Challenges of returning to the passport country.....	66
Theme 7: Internal struggles in relating to others and developing effective coping skills.....	68
Theme 8: Ability to negotiate change and a lack of fear of change.	69
Theme 9: Difference in understanding of wealth and financial management.	70
Theme 10: View experience as positive and life-changing	71
Theme 11: Challenges in adjusting to a different culture.....	72
Theme 12: Variation in relationships with family.....	73
Theme 13: Desire to travel and be in other places.	74
Summary	75
Chapter 5: Discussion	76
Theoretical Constructs.....	77
Development of a global perspective.	77
Affirmation of the complexity of relationships.	80
Struggle to achieve cultural efficacy.	82

Confirmation of the value of the experience.	85
Challenge of acculturation.	86
Change as a source of achieving equilibrium.	88
Implications for the Study	89
Research implications.	89
Practice implications.	90
Limitations of the Study	90
Conclusion.....	92
References	93
Appendix A.....	101
Appendix B	102
Appendix C	103
Appendix D.....	105
Appendix E	108

List of Tables

Table 1: Organization of Themes	52
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List of Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Letter of Approval	101
Appendix B: Letter of Introduction to Participants	102
Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire.....	103
Appendix D: Informed Consent.....	105
Appendix E: Coders Research Team Training	108

Chapter 1: Introduction

Dr. Ruth Hill Useem, a sociologist and anthropologist, and her husband, Dr. John Useem, a sociologist, lived in India with their three sons in the 1950s. They were in India to observe the impact of East Indians who had gone abroad to Western countries for higher education, and Americans who were living and working in India and schools that were designed for children who went abroad with their parents. It was from their observations on these topics that the term third culture was coined. Useem, Useem, and Donohue (1963) defined the “third culture” as “the behavior patterns created, shared, and learned by men of different societies who are in the process of relating their societies or sections thereof, to each other” (p. 169). While in India, Useem and Useem also observed the experiences of their children and the children of their participants and developed the term *Third Culture Kid* to describe the experiences of these children (Useem, 1999). According to the current definition for Third Culture Kids (TCKs), a TCK is:

A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationships to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 19).

This is a growing population that is increasingly recognized and seen for counseling services (Gaw, 2000; Lambiri, 2005). The Family Liaison Office of the U.S. Department of State (n.d.) has a webpage dedicated to TCKs that addresses who TCKs are, the issues they face, and some resources to help TCKs. On that website, TCKs are defined as “those who have spent some of their growing up years in a foreign country and experience a sense of not belonging to their passport country when they return to it” (Family Liaison Office, 2011, para. 1). The Family Liaison Office (2011) indicated that TCKs are often confronted with various challenges including not understanding their passport culture, feeling misunderstood, wanting to be accepted for who they are, needing a longer time frame to develop a secure identity, identifying fewer career options, and developing problems in relationships. It is estimated that there are over 5 million USA citizens who live outside of the United States (The Association of Americans Resident Overseas, 2010). No estimates have been found for the number of TCKs; however, given the number of people who are affected by the experience of living abroad, their experiences have not been adequately addressed in the literature.

What literature that does exist has historically been anecdotal, reported primarily in books devoted to describing the TCK experience, magazine articles, and newsletters. However, the Families In Global Transition (FIGT) Research Network (n.d.), which is composed of researchers from various fields including history, social sciences, caregivers to TCKs, authors, and other organizations, was recently formed to “cultivate, support, and disseminate rigorous research pertinent to families in global transition” (para. 1). FIGT Research Network additionally works with researchers to articulate the issues faced by this population and have proposed a new journal dedicated to “research related to

cross-cultural/international families and related topics” (E. Hervey, personal communication, April 5, 2011).

Issues in the Lives of TCKs

Pollock and Van Reken’s (2001) publication, entitled “Third Culture Kids: The Experience of Growing Up Among Worlds”, articulated the TCK experience, benefits, and challenges. Specifically, they outline issues that arise for TCKs from the first thought of moving abroad to the “host” culture to returning to the “home” or “passport” culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This publication is frequently referenced as a major contribution in the TCK literature. The primary issues that TCKs are faced with, according to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), are reentry, belonging and loneliness, loss and grief, identity, mobility, adjustment, rootlessness, and restlessness. These themes were theoretically derived from their own experiences, discussions, and interviews with other TCKs. Schaetti (2000, unpublished dissertation) conducted a review of the TCK literature to explore a global nomad identity and hypothesized a developmental model of TCKs. Schaetti (2000) identified four themes that are common to all TCKs: (a) change, (b) relationships, (c) worldview, and (d) cultural orientation.

Change. The idea of change is considered a constant in the lives of TCKs, because of the steady cycling of people moving in and out of their lives, as well as other transitions that often occur (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti, 2000). Further, TCKs are thought to develop skills that lead them to be adaptable and flexible, which assist them to become comfortable and confident in change (Cottrell, 1999; Schaetti, 2000; Werkman, 1986). Useem, Useem, Cottrell, and Jordan (1999) conducted a survey of TCKs and reported that TCKs often create change in some fashion in their lives, for

example, whether it be moving to a new house or simply moving furniture around in their house. Werkman (1986) wrote a chapter describing the adjustment of Americans living abroad and noted that TCKs often experience a sense of rootlessness as a result of the change in their lives, and Schaetti (2000) indicated that this sense of rootlessness led to a struggle in identifying a particular location as home.

Relationships. Relationship development is a complex issue for TCKs. On the one hand, Schaetti (2000) reports that TCKs have a plethora of experience in developing relationships and losing friendships, which she suggested tends to make them very reserved in their relationships. On the other hand, Gerner et al. (1992) noted that TCKs have very close relationships with their parents and siblings. This pattern can be adaptive as loss and grief seem to be an essential element of the TCK relationship (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Van Reken, 1988; Schaetti, 2000). Thus, a sense of roots is formed through relationships rather than geography (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Worldview. According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), TCKs frequently develop a three-dimensional worldview. TCKs tend to be confident in their understanding of the world and they tend to be interested in being involved in international issues (Cottrell, 1999; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Pollock and Van Reken (2001) indicated that TCKs regularly find it challenging to relate to people in their passport country who have less understanding about international issues.

Cultural orientation. Schaetti (2000) also suggested that TCKs are able to integrate their experiences of change, relationship, and worldview through a process of examination and reflection, which she identified as cultural orientation. Additionally, Schaetti and Ramsey (1999) discussed the challenges that TCKs often face because of

their involvement in multiple cultures, including not fitting into a mainstream culture and struggling with belonging because of cultural marginality. Bennett (1993) expanded on this struggle and noted that there are two dimensions to cultural marginality: encapsulated and constructive. According to Bennett (1993) an encapsulated identity creates an experience of feeling different and not feeling at home anywhere; while a constructive identity allows for utilizing the differences to be able to feel at home everywhere.

Reentry. Returning to the passport country also presents numerous challenges for the TCK. N. Adler (1981) and P. Adler (1974) reported that returning to the passport country, or reentry, is actually more difficult than the initial move abroad; this is often because people assume that the TCK is familiar with the "home" culture. For example, Gordon (1993) stated that many TCKs have the experience of feeling like outsiders when they return to the US because they do not know the culture, currently acceptable topics to talk about, or things that are popular within the culture.

Literature that has been examined so far, while limited, focuses on reentry and additionally includes psychological and sociocultural factors that contribute to better psychological adjustment, mobility issues related to loss and grief, and cultural identity (Adler, 1981; Gaw, 2000; Raschio, 1987; Sussman, 2000; Ward, & Rana-Deuba, 2000). Studies conducted on the TCK reentry experience indicate that more than 50% are seeking psychological services upon reentry (Gaw, 2000). Presenting problems include loneliness and grief, cultural identity, and adjustment issues (Huff, 2001; Ward & Rana-Deuba, 2000). Larsen and Larsen (1998) reported that adjustment can be a lifelong process for some TCKs, describing presenting problems that are similar to an adjustment disorder, and they suggest that if these issues are not resolved they could evolve into

more severe and long-term mental health concerns. As suggested by Brein and David (1971), reentry may be difficult for sojourners because they face “confrontation with the old” from their passport country and culture. The sojourners are confronted with their previous experiences, expectations, and memories of the country which may no longer be what is present at the time of reentry.

Sense of home. As noted by Pollock and Van Reken (2001), developing a sense of home can be challenging for TCKs. Cottrell (1999) notes that TCKs seem to have an experience of belonging nowhere, but at the same time also belonging everywhere. According to Larsen and Larsen (1998), when TCKs are asked "Where are you from?" this question causes “a bit of pain involving confusion about belonging” (Belonging, para. 1) as the TCK struggles to answer this question for him or herself. This question, which seems harmless, actually is very intrusive into a TCK’s life as there is no simple answer because there is not a geographical location that TCKs can identify, and it requires telling one's life story to a stranger (Larsen & Larsen, 1998). In summary, for TCKs, a sense of home is a place to feel accepted and comfortable, which may not be the passport country.

Coping with mobility. The mobility created by living abroad in multiple cultures often provides a unique experience and knowledge of different worldviews (Meneses, 2006; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This mobility experience allows TCKs to be comfortable with travel, be exposed to and have some understanding of multiple cultures and languages, and also to be flexible (Fletcher, 1995). According to Fletcher (1995) the downside of this experience can be that TCKs can become wary of commitment even for short periods of time, may be hesitant to get involved in different activities, can function

superficially in cultures, may be resistant to developing close relationships. Further, Fletcher (1995) considers that these issues can develop over time, and recommends that TCKs and those working with TCKs be educated about the potential challenges of transition and how it may impact TCKs in other areas of their lives. Additionally, Pollock and Van Reken (2001) reported that high mobility has long term implications for the TCK including difficulty settling down in one location (restlessness) and not feeling as though they belong anywhere (rootlessness).

Another theme identified in the literature, related to mobility, is loss and grief. TCKs must cope with loss and grief each time a friend leaves or other losses occur. Many of the losses are not tangible, for example, they can be smells and sounds of a culture (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Gilbert (2008) found that TCKs' losses are regularly ambiguous and the grief is commonly disenfranchised because some of the losses are not "openly mourned or socially acceptable" (p. 96). Gilbert's (2008) study demonstrated disenfranchised grief and the following losses for TCKs: persons (by death or relocation), places (countries, schools, opportunities related to the location), pets, possessions, a safe and trustworthy world (attachment to others, trust in a social setting, sense of belonging and freedom), "who I thought I was", and a place they can call home.

Identity development. The struggles that many TCKs face in developing a sense of home, coping with mobility, and dealing with loss and grief may contribute to difficulties for TCKs in developing a self-definition (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001) and Schaetti (2000), without a self-definition, TCKs may lack a coherent sense of self, and thus identity issues may have a significant impact on TCKs. Erikson theorized that identity is a major developmental

task that occurs during the adolescent years (Erikson, 1980), and if people are not able to determine one cohesive understanding of their identity, then they are faced with identity confusion.

This identity confusion can occur because of multiple influences from different cultures (Arnett, 2002). For the TCK, influences from different cultures tend to be a result of their mobile lifestyle (Fletcher, 1995; Meneses, 2006; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Schaetti, 2000). According to Van Reken (1987), there are many times that TCKs reflect on who they are and either permanently identify as “being different” (Issues Related to a Cross-cultural Upbringing, para. 6) or they may think that there is something intrinsically wrong with them because they do not know how to solidify their identity. This sense of belonging nowhere or to no land can plague a TCK's life if care is not taken to resolve the issue (Meneses, 2006; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). It is in this resolution of identity that many TCKs become able to more effectively incorporate and understand their experiences into an “integrated unity” (Meneses, 2006, p. 44) that allows them to be able to understand how they are distinctive and comparable to others (Marcia, 1980). Van Reken (1987) reported that TCKs often develop relationships, but do not allow themselves to be vulnerable because they think they are different or that something is wrong with them. There is no known research that supports the existence that “the TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 19).

Statement of the Problem

Information about TCKs comes from many different fields and has not been well integrated into an overall understanding of TCK issues and needs. Many have suggested

issues that TCKs are dealing with, but much of the methodology employed in this research lacks rigor. For example, the purpose of the study, data gathering procedures and data analysis procedures are not always clear. These methodological issues will be identified in more detail in the following literature review.

The information about TCKs is generally transmitted through informal methods, such as e-mails, casual get-togethers, or word of mouth. The research needs to be passed on through scholarly writing as well, so that research findings about this population can be used by researchers and practitioners.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how living outside of the passport country during the developmental years affected the experiences of adult Third Culture Kids. This study sought to determine the common themes relevant to the experience of TCKs, including cultural adjustment, worldview, sense of identity, and perceived social support. In this project, a constructive epistemology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) with symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective (Blumer, 1969) and grounded theory methodology (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were used to explore TCKs' experiences during the developmental years and how these affected their lives.

Research Questions

1. How does the TCK experience impact the experience of cultural adjustment?
2. Has the TCK experience affected the individual's worldview, and if so, how?
3. How has the TCK experience impacted the individual's sense of identity?
4. How does the TCK experience affect perceived social support?

Glossary of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be defined accordingly.

1. Third Culture Kid (TCK)-

A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationships to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 19).

2. Passport/home country- The TCKs' passport or home country is defined by the parents' geographical affiliation and country the parents call home.

3. Host country- The country that the TCK moved to from the passport country. There may be multiple host countries during the TCK experience.

4. Reentry- Moving to the passport country after living in at least one host country.

Limitations of the Study

The participants in this study represent a convenience sample because they were selected based on the following characteristics: age when he or she first moved abroad, duration of time abroad, and reason for being abroad. Furthermore, the limited size of the sample and the qualitative research design limit generalizability of the results.

Additionally, only TCKs who speak English fluently were eligible for this study, thus excluding TCKs who do not speak English fluently.

Summary

This study sought to contribute to the scant existing literature by exploring the experiences of adult Third Culture Kids and the effects that these experiences have on their lives after returning from living abroad. The uniqueness of the study lies in the exploration of the participants' perceptions of how the TCK experience personally impacted the individual. These data will generate insight into how living outside of their passport country frames how the adult TCK experiences his or her world.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Dr. Ruth Hill Useem first used the term Third Culture Kid in the 1950s in reference to “children who accompany their parents into another society” based on observations of her own children and the children of her research participants growing up in India (Useem, 1999, para. 6). This new term generated interest in this population and developed a better understanding of the impacts upon it. As awareness of the term Third Culture Kid increased, an effort was made to expand the definition so that it included the observances made of this population.

Sociologist Dr. David C. Pollock’s interest in TCKs began in the 1970s when he traveled to Kenya with his wife to teach and serve as parents in a boarding home for adolescent boys (Interaction International, n.d.). After their return from Kenya, he became the Executive Director of what is now known as Interaction International, which focuses on Third Culture Kids, expatriates, and their families (Interaction International, n.d.). Pollock is recognized as an authority on TCKs and was co-author of a formative book called *Third Culture Kids: Living Among Worlds* (2001). Pollock developed his own definition of Third Culture Kids which is most frequently cited in the Third Culture Kids literature. According to Pollock, a Third Culture Kid (TCK) is:

A person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership of any. Although elements from each culture are

assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationships to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 19).

Additionally, the Family Liaison Office of the U.S. Department of State (2011) defines TCKs as "those who have spent some of their growing up years in a foreign country and experience a sense of not belonging to their passport country when they return to it" (para. 1). TCKs belong to a wide range of groups including military and government, education, religion, and business (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

The world is growing smaller, figuratively, because of globalization, and people are interacting more frequently because of technological developments (e.g., internet). This increased interconnectivity and the need for organizations to send people throughout the world has in turn increased the number of TCKs. Many businesses are frequently transferring families from country to country every few years. Moving children abroad increases the complexity of their development because of the input from multiple cultures (e.g., parent's culture, the culture of the country in which they live, friends' cultures, as well as any past cultural experiences that have taken a significant role in the child's mind). According to Schaetti (2000), as little as one year of living outside of the passport country may be significant in a TCK's life. Typically, a criteria of one year spent living outside of the passport country has been used in studies about TCKs (Schaetti, 2000).

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) identified the isolation experienced by TCKs as being due to an inability to share with others the ups and downs of the TCK experience. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) also describe the TCK experience as unique and emotionally charged. Businesses and organizations which send families abroad have

been primarily responsible for generating expatriate literature. Another segment of the literature is drawn from the experiences of military personnel and religious workers. Given the number of people who are affected by the experience of living abroad, estimated to be 5 million from the United States (The Association of Americans Resident Overseas, 2010), and the emerging concern for TCKs, there is still scant literature on this topic.

As can be seen from this introduction, much of the writing about TCKs has been based on personal accounts. While these stories are wonderful narratives of the TCK experience, they lack synthesis and analysis to provide full understanding to those who professionally work with this population. According to Pollock (1988), TCKs' stories can be very powerful for other TCKs since they develop their identity in relation to those with similar experiences.

Additionally, research on the topic is difficult to locate because of the inconsistent use of terms to describe populations and phenomena. For example, TCKs can also be referred to as global nomads, sojourners, or expatriates, and they can also be identified more specifically by their parents' occupations (e.g., missionary kid, military brat, diplomat kid). An additional example of multiple terminology used in the TCK literature applies to the reentry experience of TCKs. Reentry may be referred to as reverse culture shock, repatriation, cultural adaptation, and acculturation. Each term has nuances in its meaning, but in order to access relevant research and literature, all of these terms must be used. There does not appear to be an emphasis on operationally defining the constructs that are used in the TCK literature.

The literature on TCKs can be found in several disciplines (e.g., psychology, sociology, education), which may explain the diverse terminology used. Operational definitions and clear explanations of research methodologies would be helpful to promote the development of a thorough understanding of the TCK experience between fields of study. According to the Family Liaison Office (2011), TCKs are often confronted with various challenges including not understanding their passport culture, feeling misunderstood, wanting to be accepted for who they are, needing a longer time frame to develop a secure identity, identifying fewer career options, and developing problems in relationships. The major issues that TCKs are faced with, according to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), are reentry, belonging and loneliness, loss and grief, mobility, adjustment, rootlessness, restlessness, and identity. The issues discussed in this literature are: mobility and change, rootlessness and restlessness, loss and grief, belonging, academic and career factors, reentry, and identity.

Mobility and Change

TCKs live very mobile lives, in which change occurs often (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). According to data gathered in 1986 by Pollock and Van Reken (2001), in which 282 post-university adult TCKs between the ages of 22 and 75 were surveyed, the pattern of TCKs' separation from their parents has shifted since the end of World War II. In this study, the participants were divided into two groups: those born before 1947 and those who were born in 1947 or later. No additional information was provided regarding the methodology of this study. The results indicated that prior to 1947, TCKs were more likely to be separated from their parents for a significant time prior to age 6, and they suggested that this was (a) because in 1944 there was a ban on children traveling across

the ocean because of the risks due to the war and (b) educational needs and health concerns. In regards to separation from parents, those born before 1947 were separated an average of 3.6 years and those born in 1947 or later were separated an average of 11 months.

McLachlan (2005) conducted a qualitative study of 45 internationally mobile families which explored how they managed relocation and transience. This study also included steps to increase the trustworthiness of results by including triangulation of data, triangulation of researchers, and an audit trail. Grounded theory methodology was used to analyze the data and one major theme that emerged was the importance of family in managing transience. The participants noted that the family was strengthened and used to assist in coping with mobility.

The mobility experienced by TCKs appears to allow them to be comfortable with travel, have experience with and at least some understanding of multiple cultures and languages, adapt more easily, and be flexible (Fletcher, 1995; Gerner, 1992; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The high amount of change also has some negative consequences. People can enter and exit the lives of TCKs more frequently than experienced by the average person. TCKs are also displaced from extended family and also may have little familiarity with the passport culture. Because of this, TCKs may become guarded from making close friends, avoid commitment even on a short-term basis, detach easily from relationships, be cautious of social involvement, and live superficially in any culture (Fletcher, 1995; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Rootlessness and restlessness. Another common theme for TCKs is rootlessness, which is described as not having a sense of home or being able to answer

the question “where are you from” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The high mobility lends itself to feelings of not belonging to any one place. TCKs are likely to feel some level of comfort in most places because they have learned the skills to adapt and adjust to moving (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Cottrell and Useem (1999) indicated that in their study about the long-term effects of the TCK experience conducted with 680 TCKs, there were several participants who indicated continued feelings of rootlessness; however, there was no information about the exact number or percentage of participants who endorsed those feelings. McLachlan (2005) found that another major theme was in regard to the complexity of roots and the meaning of home. The results indicated that for the participants, roots were geographic and relational. The high mobility can also lead to restlessness when staying in one place for an extended period of time (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Many TCKs experience a need to move and frequently try new things. They are not familiar with staying in one place that remains relatively unchanged.

Loss and grief. TCKs may have a difficult time dealing with unresolved grief because often the losses are hidden (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Many of the losses for TCKs “are intangible parts of their world (e.g., the sights, sounds, and smell of market day or the call of a particular bird each morning)” (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001, p. 166); but they also have losses due to moving or life events. One of the reasons some TCKs have a hard time coping with loss is because they feel that admitting to pain denies the happiness they experienced due to the multicultural influences in their lives (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), there is richness in the multicultural experiences of TCKs, and the acknowledgement of pain resulting from this lifestyle seems to blame the lifestyle itself.

Since the losses are often hidden, there is frequently no formal permission given to grieve, and additionally, there may not be time to process the loss (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Most often the unresolved grief is apparent in reactions such as denial, anger, depression, withdrawal, or rebellion (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). Two other possibilities are that TCKs will experience the grief of others (e.g., parents) rather than their own, or a seemingly insignificant event, such as taking out the trash, can trigger a disproportionate reaction (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

In a study exploring memorable losses experienced by adult TCKs during childhood, Gilbert (2008) interviewed 43 participants who had spent at least one year as a minor dependent of a parent or guardian who was employed outside of his or her passport country. She used open-ended inductive data analysis and also took several steps to ensure trustworthiness of the study (e.g., triangulation of data sources, negative case analysis, and member checking). The results revealed that the participants experienced disenfranchised grief and self-disenfranchisement due to the nature of the losses experienced. Multiple types of losses were identified: persons, places, pets, a safe and trustworthy world, “who I thought I was”, and a place they can call home.

The losses of persons by death and moving, which Gilbert (2008) noted, created a peer network that was in constant flux. Additionally, the participants noted that although efforts were made to maintain contact with friends, they missed the “easy, relaxed camaraderie of close physical proximity” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 100). They frequently noted the loss of the country in which they lived, but additionally indicated that changing schools and not having opportunities that were tied to a particular location (e.g., school trips and museums) were memorable losses. Although the loss of pets was mentioned by

some participants, Gilbert (2008) noted that this was not a consistently reported memorable loss. She indicated that although many participants stated that possessions were not important to them, several shared the importance of possessions at a younger age, and typically this was related to the symbolic and emotional value of the items.

According to Gilbert (2008), the losses that were most often mentioned first by participants were existential ones, such as perceptions of a safe and trustworthy world, “who I thought I was”, and a place to call home. She found that a common concern for her participants was the loss of trust and safety, especially related to social settings. Also, a loss of freedom related to the safety of locations and the ability to navigate through cities was noted by some participants. The loss Gilbert (2008) identified as “who I thought I was” was related to the TCKs’ realizations that they were different from peers in their passport country, and this often resulted in the participants being cautious in those social interactions. The participants also tended to adjust their behavior in an attempt to make their differences less obvious; however, this resulted in the participants feeling on the outside of their social world and a sense of loneliness. The final type of loss noted was a place to call home. The participants indicated the loss was related to the realization that “home was absent from their lives” (Gilbert, 2008, p. 105).

Part of the data collected by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) in 1986 was qualitative statements by the participants about the cycles of separation from family and friends. These were then coded as positive, neutral, or negative. They found that 40.1 % of participants born before 1947 and 39.2% of those born in or after 1947 indicated the cycles of separation had a negative impact. They noted that a major theme was “fear of

intimacy because of the fear of loss” (p. 302). Additionally, they concluded the cycles of separation and loss, rather than the duration of the separation, are what affects TCKs.

Belonging

When TCKs experience difficult adjustment in new situations and cultures, they may be unable to find themselves in the new context because they have poor identity development. It is more likely that TCKs will have difficulties adjusting and coping with the problems experienced due to lack of understanding of their multicultural identity. This lack of understanding can lead to a sense of not belonging.

Many TCKs are faced with the task of attempting to answer the ‘who am I?’ question. TCKs “who have rejected their pasts often have a difficult time embracing their multi-cultural experience, a precondition to resolving their identity issues” (Larsen & Larsen, 1998, Identity, para.2). TCKs are not taught to understand the dynamics or issues that are inherent to their lifestyle, such as high mobility, attachment difficulties, flexibility because of constant change, grief for losses that constantly occur, and a need to belong (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). This often occurs because TCKs are not aware that there are other people who have experiences that are very similar to their own, and “the TCK may take on a permanent identity of ‘being different’ [or] may conclude that something is intrinsically wrong with them because they never seem to fit anywhere” (Van Reken, 1987, Issues Related to Cross-Cultural Upbringing, para.6). TCKs often do not understand that what they feel is a part of their lifestyle and not an anomaly (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001).

Indicators of interpersonal adjustment based on interviews with TCKs, families, and friends have been reported to include satisfaction with friends, interpersonal comfort,

and self-esteem (Scott & Scott, 1998). Raschio (1987) conducted a 15-question interview with 11 TCKs who had spent between three months to one year in a host country, in order to identify (a) personal factors that affected reentry, (b) traits and recommendations for later studies and (c) recommendations for reentry programs. No additional information was provided about the methodology of the study. In these interviews, a pattern of identification of personal conflict and adjustment difficulties appeared to arise when TCKs developed an awareness of intrapersonal or interpersonal change, which was related to a sense of being different from the passport culture (Raschio, 1987). TCKs identified that one component of feeling different from the passport culture was derived from gaining a new perspective from comparing the home and host cultures throughout their experiences (Raschio, 1987). TCKs reported that this perspective included new views on patience, objectivity, priorities of goals, development of increased language skills, global view, and increased awareness of people as individuals (Raschio, 1987). Explanations of each of these aspects of the new perspective were not provided by the author, leaving the meanings of the results open to interpretation that may not be what was intended by the participants.

Academic and Career Factors

Fletcher (1995) noted that TCKs tended to be highly motivated for educational achievement. In their survey of 680 TCKs about the long-term effect of the TCK experience, Useem, Useem, Cottrell, and Jordan (1999), found that TCKs were four times more likely to complete a bachelor's degree than their USA counterparts. The methodology used in the study was not mentioned. In evaluating responses of 400 of the

TCKs from the above study, Cottrell and Ussem found that 56% of those participants had incorporated an international aspect into their occupation.

Reentry

Several approaches have been used to explain the cultural adjustments that are experienced by sojourners upon reentry to the passport country, which include the U and W curves of adjustment, culture shock, personality typologies, personality traits, background and situational factors, and social interaction (see Brein & David, 1971 for a summary of findings). These approaches have considered factors that affect adjustment, but have not been specific to TCKs. The adjustment process of TCKs has been recognized as one that deserves recognition and further exploration (Adler, 1975; Brein & David, 1971; Ender, 2002; Neto, 2002; Pedersen, 1995; Pollock & Van Reken, 2001; Sussman, 2000).

The primary area that has been evaluated in TCK literature is the issue of reentry to the passport country (Schaetti, 2000). At reentry, TCKs are faced with an adjustment that is not anticipated, since they are returning to the passport country which is considered the home culture. Often TCKs know very little about the culture of their parents because they have not had intensive personal experience with it, and returning home for the parents does not necessarily mean returning home for the children (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001) this may be difficult for a TCK because often the parents and those who know the TCK may not realize that this could be an unfamiliar experience that is strange, uncomfortable, and confusing. Huff (2001) surveyed missionary kids (MKs) and non-MKs about reverse culture shock and found that the MKs experienced significantly greater distance from their passport

country than non-MKs. These results suggested that the reentry experience can be challenging for TCKs because they do not identify with their passport country.

These feelings related to reentry can become magnified because people may convey messages to the TCK that he or she should be familiar and comfortable with the passport country (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). For example, TCKs are often faced with trying to learn about common childhood experiences of people in that particular country (e.g., cartoons, games, toys, music). Attempting to belong and be accepted can be challenging among teenagers, who, according to Gordon (1993), are unforgiving of fellow teenagers who do not know what is popular (e.g., music groups, athletes, clothing), accepted, and expected.

Age. In the data collected by Pollock and Van Reken (2001) in 1986, a trend about the age when TCKs permanently returned to their passport countries was noted. In the group born before 1947, the average age for returning to the passport country was 12 or 13 years. The trend indicated that the average age when the group of TCKs born after 1947 permanently returned to the passport culture was 17, and this was typically due to attending university.

Huff (2001) compared 49 MKs' experiences at reentry and found that MKs over age 15 experienced greater interpersonal distance, and grief about leaving the host culture, than those who were younger than 15 years of age. These results suggested that leaving the host culture after age 15 would result in greater difficulty relating to those in the passport country and also in experiencing more grief about leaving the host country. However, after using the Bonferroni correction to control Type I error, the results of this within group comparison t-test were insignificant, which may indicate that age is not a

significant factor in the experiences of TCKs. Additionally, there was no mention of how amount of time abroad related to the previous findings.

Relationships. At reentry, there are many changes for TCKs as they attempt to adjust to the passport country, including relationships. Huff (2001) found that of the 49 MKs surveyed, those who had 11 or more transitions had greater social adjustment than MKs who had 10 or fewer transitions. This may be as a result of having more experience relating in a variety of social situations. Additionally, MKs who had attended boarding school when they lived abroad had less interpersonal distance with others than MKs who did not attend boarding school. These results suggest that MKs who experience more transitions and are involved in boarding schools while abroad may be more likely to have better social adjustment and ability to relate to peers in the passport country. However, after using the Bonferroni correction to control Type I error, the results of these within group comparison t-tests were insignificant, which may indicate that the number of transitions and the type of school attended are not significant factors in the TCKs' experiences and any differences may be due to chance alone.

Identity Formation

Erikson (1980) theorized that identity formation is a developmental struggle that occurs during the adolescent years, and if individuals are not able to determine one cohesive understanding of their identity they are faced with identity confusion. This identity confusion can occur because of significant changes in culture related to globalization, influences of other cultures, or multiple influences from different cultures that the child experiences because of a mobile lifestyle (Arnett, 2002). Additionally, Arnett (2002) stated "identity confusion among young people may be reflected in

problems such as depression, suicide, and substance use” (p. 779), which speaks to the essential need to have a stable identity for young people. The development of identity is a major component of human development. Erikson (1980) proposed that further development will be inhibited if identity is not successfully established. Many TCKs return to their home cultures without an understanding of how living abroad has impacted their identity, which may put them at a disadvantage for establishing a sense of identity.

The development of a stable identity affects an individual’s ability to adjust to different situations, including life-changing events (Cameron, 1999). Identity formation is a complex process of judging the self (a) as an individual, (b) in comparison to others’ judgment, and (c) in comparison to social and cultural norms (Gardiner & Kosmitzki, 2005). For individuals who have multiple cultures influencing their identity, one of the cultures may take predominance over the others. The balance reached by every individual that allows him or her to function within the culture is important for the development of the identity. “A solid identity includes a social connection guided by a sense of filial connections and generational continuity and an inner solidarity with a group’s ideals” (Huang, 1994, p. 45).

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggested four identities for TCKs, but did not provide specifics about how these identities are formed; research has not been conducted with TCKs to support these suggestions. They proposed that the four culture-related identities of TCKs are: (a) mirror, (b) stranger, (c) adopted, and (d) hidden immigrant. Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggested that these identities are experienced by TCKs when they move among cultures; they are a mirror in their initial country of origin, a

stranger when they arrive to the new country, an adopted identity with the new country, often after many years, and hidden immigrants upon reentry.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) described the mirror identity as when the TCK looks like the other members of the culture and thinks like them as well. For example, a Hispanic American child may move to a Latin country. In this case, the child looks like those who surround him or her, and also may think as they do because of the family's Hispanic background. In the stranger identity, the person does not look like the other members of the culture, nor does he or she think like them. This may be seen in situations such as a child from Minnesota moving to rural Africa. The child does not look like those who are in Africa, and does not think like them either, but rather thinks as a child from Minnesota. The adopted identity is one in which the TCK does not look like the other members of the culture, but does think like them. This can be seen in situations where a child's family is from one country (e.g., the United States), but the child is born and raised in another (e.g., Papua New Guinea). The child does not look like those from Papua New Guinea, but does think as they do since it is the frame of reference with which he or she is familiar. An individual with hidden immigrant identity looks like the other members of the culture, but thinks differently. This can be seen in TCKs who return to the home country after living abroad for a significant time.

Cultural influence on identity. Not only are TCKs confronted with adjustment concerns, they are also faced with identity concerns about who they are and what they believe, partly because of their diverse cultural exposure. Culture has been characterized as “patterned attitudes, motives, and values” (Sapir, 1993, p. 178) of the individual in

relation to others. One definition of culture is “the learned and shared behavior of a community of interacting human being” (Useem, Useem, & Donoghue, 1963, p. 169).

Culture can have a very powerful effect on every aspect of a person’s life because it is how one begins to define the self. “The self-concept is a by-product of social experience, whereby one comes to define one’s self through the accumulation and synthesis of opinions, judgments, speech, and behaviors directed toward one by others” (Newman & Newman, 2001, p. 517). For TCKs the social experience includes multiple cultures. Since “culture resides deep in the conscious and unconscious of the self” (Hoare, 1994, p. 28), culture provides a constant for people.

There are many people who are now developing multicultural identities because of more frequent exposure to other cultures (Arnett, 2002). Complications in developing this multicultural identity may occur when cultures interface and different ideas are brought into conflict. According to Arnett (2002), when someone from one culture is placed into a different culture, the cultural and family values he or she holds may conflict with the social influences of the new culture. Since TCKs are still in their developmental years when they are exposed to the new culture, they are likely to begin to integrate the new culture because the home culture is not yet well-established or well-understood (Arnett, 2002). The child begins to learn from the experiences and exposure of the current environment.

Addressing identity formation without a cultural view is impossible because “cultures set the parameter of identity formation” (Côté, 1996, p. 418). Culture plays an integral role in a person’s development of his or her identity, and a well-formed identity assists a person in having a solid life foundation. The complexity of understanding and

integrating multiple cultures simultaneously is a challenge, and it is necessary that “the social process involved in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are both determined by the social structure” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 159). The background and history of a person are very important, especially with various influencing cultures, and they should be understood by the individual in order to assist a solid identity formation.

Multiracial identity. TCKs’ identities draw upon multiple influences, and one group from which similarities may be drawn is multiracial individuals. Root (1990) identified four potential paths of identity development which multiracial individuals could take. She proposed that each path could lead to a better understanding of how the person viewed him or herself, but suggested that an integrated view may be the most beneficial. The first path is one in which a person allows society to determine his or her identity as a racial individual (Root, 1990). There is no analysis on the part of the individual in evaluating this identity; it is simply accepted and considered to be the truth. Society will typically only label the individual with one of the racial identities, and this tends to be the "lesser" of the two because of the belief that if the blood is not pure then it is not as valuable (Root, 1992). The second path suggested by Root (1990) is one in which the individual is aware of the differences between racial identities and attempts to use both identities. Since this is a complicated process, Root (1990) indicated that the individual who takes this path uses the different racial identities at different times and is thus able to adapt to the appropriate social situation to which they are presented. The third path involves a critical analysis and decision by the individual to identify with one of the racial identities (Root, 1990). This is different from the first path in that the

individual is able to choose and does so based on what he or she feels is the best fit for how he or she views himself or herself. The fourth path indicated by Root (1990) is an integrated identity based on the different races. In this path, the person is able to integrate the different racial identities into a unique package that allows the individual to identify as he or she sees fit.

In an attempt to integrate the immigrant experience into the multiracial experience, LaFrombroise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) proposed a theory of immigrant identity development that considered not only racial heritage, but also cultural influence. In this theory, it was suggested that identity is actually a compilation of bicultural competencies that are developed as one learns the intricacies of both cultures. The authors suggested that well-being may be the result of development and maintenance of competence in both of the cultures. The competencies recommended by LaFrombroise et al. are: (a) knowledge of cultural beliefs and values, (b) positive attitude toward both groups, (c) bicultural efficacy, (d) communication ability, (e) role repertoire, and (f) sense of being grounded. Each of these is briefly described in the following paragraph.

The knowledge of cultural beliefs and values competency is identified as “the degree to which an individual is aware of and knowledgeable about the history, institutions, rituals, and everyday practices of a given culture” (LaFrombroise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993, p. 403). The development of a positive attitude towards both groups is based on an assumption that bicultural competence is desirable to develop a nonhierarchical relationship between the two cultures. According to LaFromboise et al. (1993), bicultural efficacy is “the belief, or confidence, that one can live effectively, and in a satisfying manner, within two groups without compromising one’s sense of cultural

identity” (p. 404). The competency of communication ability refers to the ability to communicate ideas and feelings in both cultural groups in verbal and nonverbal formats. Role repertoire suggests developing competence in behaviors and roles that are culturally and situationally appropriate. The final competence that was suggested by LaFromboise et al. is a sense of being grounded, which refers to developing and maintaining social networks in both cultures.

Ethnic/Cultural identity. According to Sussman (2000), culture provides the framework for understanding the self, and a person’s cultural identity assists in interpreting, responding, and evaluating the world in which he or she lives. Ethnic identity is “part of an individual’s self-concept that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1981, p. 63). This is an especially important concept when self-identification is considered, and it is possible for people to feel that they are part of a social group that may not be indicated by genetics or family heritage. Many of the findings about reentry of TCKs seem to be related to a core issue of identity. TCKs have a sense of being different (Raschio, 1987). The ability to relate to the passport culture and have positive psychological adjustment may not be an issue of which culture TCKs are identifying, but rather whether they have a sense of identity that they have taken time to explore. By assessing ethnic identity to evaluate the overall level of strength of the identity, TCK issues may be better understood.

In comparing multiracial and immigrant identity theories to TCKs, there is a sense that they do indeed share similar experiences; however, this needs to be examined further to determine if the theories discussed are representative of the experiences of TCKs. The

field would benefit from greater exploration of whether ethnic identity contributes to TCKs' perceptions of being different.

Appropriateness of Methods

The research and literature discussed here have begun to bring awareness about this population, but there is a lack of a solid foundation for future research. The current knowledge requires integration into a comprehensive theory of the TCK experience so that research can be well guided and organized. The available research studies have suggested that reentry adjustment is a unique phenomenon that is not well understood. Personal accounts and interviews have assessed patterns in reported experiences. Research studies have either been poorly developed or are poorly explained in regards to methodology, which calls the results and conclusions into question. In the qualitative research studies previously discussed, there was often insufficient description of the methodology for how the data were analyzed. Several of the quantitative studies did not provide a focused analysis of the data, but rather provided generalizations about descriptive properties of the sample. Also, studies which attempted to examine quantitative data in a focused manner had small samples sizes that resulted in non-significant findings, which may have resulted from insufficient power.

The qualitative design of the present study was an appropriate methodology to explore how living outside of one's passport country during his or her developmental years affects the experiences of adult Third Culture Kids. Since the research about TCKs does not provide a solid foundation and has not effectively established relevant variables to be investigated, a qualitative study was appropriate to explore this experience. Qualitative research allows for this phenomena to be explored in depth and gain

information that will assist in furthering understanding about TCKs and providing guidance for future research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The research questions that were explored in this study are the following:

1. How does the TCK experience impact the experience of cultural adjustment?
2. Has the TCK experience affected the individual's worldview, and if so, how?
3. How has the TCK experience impacted the individual's sense of identity?
4. How does the TCK experience affect perceived social support?

Chapter 3: Method

Overview of Methodology

Qualitative research “involves understanding the complexity of people’s lives by examining individual perspectives in context” (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999, p. 235). The research questions for this study follow the above premise by examining adult TCKs experiences and how these experiences have impacted their lives. The nature of this project also meets the criteria described by Creswell (1998) for a qualitative study in that it seeks to describe an experience, aims to provide a detailed picture of the experience, and the researcher will be an active learner rather than an expert.

In this project, a constructive epistemology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) with symbolic interactionism theoretical perspective (Blumer, 1969) and grounded theory methodology (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were used. These approaches take into account the strong impact that culture has on the way things are viewed and understood. The epistemology of constructivism holds that there is no objective truth but rather meaning is constructed “in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (Crotty, 1998, p. 42). Following from this understanding of how knowledge is attained, the symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective, focuses on assumptions about reality and emphasizes how labels, definitions, and meanings affect

social life (Mooney, Knox, & Schacht, 2002) and psychological functioning by viewing “culture as the meaningful matrix that guides our lives” (Crotty, 1998, p. 71).

As summarized by Dey (1999), the purpose of the methodology of grounded theory is to discover theory. According to Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), in grounded theory methodology, theory is defined as “a description of a pattern that you find in the data” (p. 32). The process to discover theory is not simple and requires much observation and care taken by the researcher throughout the entire process. One of the primary things that must be done when using grounded theory is to set aside theoretical and preconceived ideas in order to allow the true theory that exists in the data to emerge without external influences (Dey, 1999). Grounded theory methodology attempts to discover theory by evaluating and analyzing how individuals act in relation to the phenomenon in question (Dey, 1999).

The theory that emerges is based on the data that are gathered from interviews and it is the researcher’s job to identify categories that emerge and then to connect the categories to develop the theory (Dey, 1999). Further data are gathered based on emerging concepts from the data that have already been obtained. Grounded theory has been previously used in the psychology literature (e.g., Charmaz, 1997; Coates, 2001; Lempert, 1995; Meneses, 2006; Stratton, 1997; Zink, Jacobson, & Palbst, 2006).

Participants

The participants for this study ranged in age from 19 to 55 years of age, had spent between one and a half years to 18 years in a country other than that of their passport country prior to the age of 18, and had been back in the passport country between two and 50 years. Participants needed to have spent time abroad prior to age 18 in order to

meet the criteria for a TCK, as defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001). A minimum of one year abroad was selected based on Schaetti's (2000) definition of a significant amount of time during childhood and adolescence. At least one year back in the passport country was requested so that the TCK had experienced reentry. Participants spoke English fluently, Institutional Review Board approval was obtained for participants to have their answers audio recorded and to participate in this study (see Appendix A). A total of 16 individuals participated in this study.

Participant selection procedure. Potential participants were petitioned through snowball sampling methods because the TCK population is difficult to identify without having members of the group identify them (Bernard, 2002; R. E. Van Reken, personal communication, January 26, 2007). The researcher contacted potential participants that were known to meet the criteria and also contacted people who may be able to provide referrals to TCKs. As potential participants were identified, the researcher sent, via e-mail, a letter of introduction (see Appendix B) to provide information about the research study and expectations. A demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) was also sent to potential participants to determine their eligibility for inclusion in the study. It was explained that participants' responses would be evaluated and compared with other participants' responses to further research on the TCKs experience. Once the individual agreed to participate, a consent form (see Appendix D) was sent via e-mail and an electronic signature was requested. All documents were password protected. An interview was then scheduled at a time that accommodated the interviewer's and participant's schedules. Participants were informed that the interview was expected to take approximately one to two hours. Of the 16 participants who participated in this

study, only 15 interviews were used because the audio quality of one recording was not audible.

Procedure

Identifying and training of research team. All members of the research team were included in the approval by IRB. To avoid any possible bias that may have entered the interview process by the primary researcher, one doctoral student in counseling psychology, without prior knowledge about the topic of this study, was recruited to administer the interviews. The researcher met with the interviewer and provided a one-hour training about how to conduct the interviews and use the equipment. The training included a discussion of the script, questions, and methods to elicit more information and details about the participants' experiences. Part of the training involved helping the interviewer to probe participants when answers were not clear or need additional clarification. These methods followed recommendation made by Rubin and Rubin (2005). The researcher reviewed IRB protocol with the interviewer. The interviewer and researcher debriefed after the first interview and the researcher provided feedback to her about the interview process. The interviewer wrote notes about her impressions of the interviews and any themes that she noted. The notes did not contain any identifying information and were set aside until the end of the interview process.

A research team of six master's level counseling students, without prior knowledge about the topic of this study, assisted with the initial data analysis. They attended a one-hour training session by the researcher in the grounded theory method used in this study (see Appendix E). Two coders were assigned to work on each transcript, and each coder completed a minimum of two transcripts. As coders would

finish their analyses of each transcript, they were assigned another transcript to analyze until all transcripts had been completed.

The interview. The interview protocol was designed to address the questions of the study and capture the TCK experience. The questions did not use the term third culture kid to avoid any possible bias in data collection; however, the language of the definition of TCKs, according to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), was used in the interview protocol. All interviews were conducted by telephone and were recorded on a digital voice recorder via a telephone adaptor. The following introductory script was read to each participant before beginning the interview:

Hi, my name is Jill Sullivan. Once again, our team would like to thank you for your participation in this research study. Before we begin the interview, I want to remind you that this interview will be digitally recorded. Are you alright with that? (wait for response).

I'd also like to remind you that everything you say will remain confidential. Only the research team and our faculty advisor will have access to the information you provide to me during this interview. Your name will not appear in any of the documentation, as we will use initials only. I would also like to encourage you to use only first names when referring to any person(s) during the interview. The recording will be locked in a secure location.

I want you to feel comfortable during the interview and if at any point you would like to stop, let me know. Also, remember that your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any point during this study. Do you have any questions before we start?

Let's begin.

As participants were screened and selected, a semi-structured interview was conducted individually with participants over the telephone. Each participant was asked the same set of 12 initial questions along with an opportunity to explore additional areas that participants believed were important aspects of the experience but were not covered during the interview (Bernard, 2002). The questions were general enough to allow for discussion from the participant about his or her personal experience without any indication of what answers may be expected. Questions included:

- (a) Please describe your experience as a person who has lived abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years.
- (b) What does it mean for *you* to be a person who has lived abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years?
- (c) What have been the benefits of being a person who has lived abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years?
- (d) What have been the challenges of being a person who has lived abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years?
- (e) What was reentry like for you when you returned to your passport country?
- (f) How has living in another country for a significant portion of your developmental years affected your identity?
- (g) How have you developed your identity to include the multiple cultures that you have experienced?
- (h) What is your ethnic/cultural identity?

- (i) Please describe how being exposed to multiple cultures has impacted your ability to connect with people socially.
- (j) What is your social support system like?
- (k) How has living abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years affected your academic and career decisions?
- (l) How has living in another country impacted your worldview?
- (m) Anything else that is important that we have not yet discussed that you think I should know?

The researcher and interviewer met after the fourth interview and the interviewer suggested that the following question (How did living abroad impact your understanding of finances?) be added to the interview protocol because participants had mentioned that this was an area they believed was important in their experiences. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours, and on average lasted 45 minutes. The interview that lasted 30 minutes was excluded from the data analysis because of the poor quality of the audio recording. The interview that lasted two hours appeared to be an outlier in terms of the length of the interview.

Transcription of interviews. All of the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. One participant's results were not transcribed and analyzed because the audio recording of the interview was not able to be transcribed due to the audio quality. Interview transcripts were identified with the participants' initials only. The researcher transcribed the interviews in a clean verbatim format which allowed for long pauses, stuttering, and utterances such as um and uh to be removed from the transcript.

The researcher completed the transcripts based on the audio quality of the recorded interviews which were slightly distorted due to the use of the adaptor for the telephone. At times this resulted in awkward grammatical structures that were not corrected by the researcher. After the transcripts were complete, the researcher again listened to the interviews to ensure accuracy. Spelling errors were also corrected and proper names of people, cities, and employers were abbreviated to ensure the participant's confidentiality throughout the remainder of the research study. All interview transcripts were password protected documents.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis. Grounded theory was used in analyzing the responses of the participants in order to allow theory to emerge from the data (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The research team completed the initial data analysis. The first step in the data analysis process was to select the *relevant text* from the transcripts. In doing this, the coders would read through the text and select the text that expressed a distinct idea about the research question (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Throughout their involvement in the study, the coders noted their thoughts and reasons for making the choices that they did and to assist in later steps of data analysis. Questions that coders were encouraged to ask themselves in making selections of relevant text were: (a) Does it relate to the research question, (b) does it help you understand the participant better, (c) does it clarify your thinking, (d) does it simply seem important even if you cannot say why (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

The second step in the data analysis process was to identify *repeating ideas*. After the relevant text had been selected, the coders read through the relevant text again and

began to look for repeating ideas. To identify repeating ideas coders would start with the first relevant text statement and then read through the remainder of the relevant text for additional statements that seemed related to the first statement (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This process was continued until all of the statements had been grouped together. Coders were instructed that if there were any text segments that were not grouped with others they were to make a decision about how it should be handled. The options included (a) discard the text because it does not seem important, (b) go back through the transcript to determine if there are other statements that go with the lone statement, or (c) decide that the text is important on its own (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

After both coders had completed identifying the relevant text and the repeating ideas for each participant, the researcher then reviewed the analyses to ensure that the statements were consistent with the transcripts. The researcher then combined the two sets of repeating ideas generated by each coder for each participant (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). To do this, the researcher looked for shared repeating ideas and combined both lists of repeating ideas into one comprehensive list for each participant. As duplicates were located in the same repeating idea they were deleted. When identical statements were found in multiple repeating ideas, the researcher decided where to appropriately place the statement based on best fit. This process was repeated until both sets of repeating ideas were combined for each participant.

Next, all of the participants' repeating ideas were combined into a master repeating ideas file. To do this, the researcher began with one repeating idea and then continued reading through all the repeating ideas and grouped similar ideas together (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). This was repeated until all of the repeating ideas for all

of the participants were combined. Any ideas that seemed to be too broad were broken down further and any ideas that were too narrow were integrated into other ideas (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). If there were repeating ideas that were not replicated with other participants, those ideas were reviewed by the researcher and a decision was made about whether to (a) discard the idea, (b) identify additional statements that were similar, or (c) indicate that the idea was important on its own (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) recommended that there should be approximately 40-80 repeating ideas. Once the master list of the repeating ideas was finalized, they were named by utilizing quotes that “captures the essence of each repeating idea in a dramatic and emotionally vivid way” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 60). At this point, the results were reviewed by two members of the research team for organization of the data and to ensure that the rationale used for the organization was “transparent” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 61). Feedback from these reviewers was used to adjust the master repeating ideas file. A total of nine changes were made to the repeating ideas. There were four quotes that were removed and five quotes that were moved to a different repeating idea.

In the third step, the repeating ideas were grouped into *themes* utilizing the same method as before of starting with the first repeating idea and looking for similar ideas that express a common theme. Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) recommended that the number of themes be a reduction of three or four times the number of repeating ideas, and further suggested that approximately 10-20 themes is most useful. Throughout this process if there are any independent ideas identified, the same procedure is recommended to (a) delete the item, (b) search the text for additional items, or (c) identify the item as

important on its own. The themes are then named utilizing simple phrases that avoid jargon so that participants could identify these themes as a part of the interview data they provided (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). Another part of the third stage involves review of themes with consultants. Two consultants were identified to fulfill this part of the third stage, one consultant is a trained counseling psychologist who has worked with TCKs and is a parent of two adult TCKs, and one is an adult TCK and mother to three TCKs. Both consultants independently reviewed the list of themes identified and were asked to determine, based on their knowledge and experience with TCKs, if there may be additional themes that were not recognized by the researcher's organization of the data. Four changes were recommended by the consultants. Two of the changes suggested bracketing additional information in quotes for clarification. One of the recommendations was a change in a title of a theme for clarification. The final recommendation was to combine two of the themes. All of these changes were made to the data analysis.

Finally, in stage four the themes were grouped into *theoretical constructs* that “organizes a group of themes by fitting them into a theoretical framework” (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003, p. 67). The organization follows that same pattern as the previous stages of starting with the first theme and identifying other themes that seem to be related. The theoretical constructs were then named using the literature in the field and general knowledge that explained the organizing principles (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). These results were reviewed with a consultant to again ensure that the organization was rational and reflective of the data.

Quality Control

In qualitative research the rigor of the research is assessed by the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness is assessed by evaluating the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Several strategies were used in this study to establish trustworthiness.

Credibility. Credibility of this study was enhanced by utilizing prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation of investigators, and peer debriefing. Prolonged engagement and persistent observation posit that a researcher should spend time in the field to better recognize the culture of participants, understand the information provided and additionally be able to identify when the “atypical may have importance” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304). This was done through engagement in the materials (e.g., listening to the audio recordings, reading transcripts, and reading coded data) and the primary researcher’s time working with TCKs in counseling. The research team provided triangulation of investigators through each person working independently and then combining results and discussing the outcome and structure of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefing allowed research interpretations and decisions to be discussed with individuals who were not directly invested in the study, including the primary researcher’s dissertation chair, consultants, and the research team (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability. To assist researchers in their evaluation of the transferability of the results of this study, a description of the researcher and participants will be provided in the next chapter to help readers understand the context and population involved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability. The dependability of the study was enhanced by using an inquiry audit where the process and product were evaluated for accuracy by consultants after each stage of data analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confirmability. As a part of the inquiry audit, an audit trail that can be reviewed by a peer was maintained throughout the study. Confidentiality was maintained through this process. Information that will be maintained for the audit trail includes the raw data, initial and final repeating ideas, themes and theoretical constructs, researcher's journal, documents written to participants, training materials for the research team, interview protocol, and the completed write-up of the study.

Reflexive writing. In qualitative research, it is essential that the researcher be self-aware and take into account his or her own experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All biases and expectations of the researcher and interviewer were recorded in a journal. The interviewer's reactions and impressions were recorded following each interview. The researcher included her thoughts and reactions during the research process to increase self-awareness and the trustworthiness of the study.

Chapter 4: Results

Participants

There were 15 participants, 10 females and five males, who ranged in age from 19-55 years (average = 29.8; mode = 21). Participants age when they first moved abroad from their passport country ranged from birth-16 years (average = 3.69 years; mode = birth). Participants time abroad prior to age 18 ranged from 1.5-18 years (average = 10.37; mode = 6, 8). Overall, participants lived in 23 countries prior to age 18, and individually ranged from 1-7 countries (average 2.93; mode = 2). The range of years since returning from the last host country was 2-50 (average = 13.93; mode = 2). Participants spoke 1-3 languages fluently (average = 1.67; mode = 2). More detailed information is provided below about each participant. To safeguard the confidentiality of the participants, some information is withheld from the description of the participants; specifically, countries lived in other than passport country and participants' initials.

Participant 1. At the time of the interview, Participant 1 was a 42-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in seven countries prior to age 18. She was born outside of her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for 15 years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for business reasons. While abroad, she attended national and international schools. At the time of the interview it had been 25 years since she had returned from the host countries. In addition to English, she also spoke French fluently.

Participant 2. At the time of the interview, Participant 2 was a 19-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in two countries prior to age 18. She was born outside of her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for eight years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended boarding school and was homeschooled. At the time of the interview it had been 10 years since she had returned from the host country. She spoke only English fluently.

Participant 3. At the time of the interview, Participant 3 was a 23-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in two countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for 17 years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been six years since she had returned from the host country. In addition to English, she also spoke French fluently.

Participant 4. At the time of the interview, Participant 4 was a 26-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in three countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for one and a half years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended national and international schools, and also a small, Christian, missionary kid school. At the time of the interview it had been five years since she had returned from the host countries. In addition to English, she also spoke Spanish fluently.

Participant 5. At the time of the interview, Participant 5 was a 29-year-old, Caucasian/Hispanic female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in four countries prior to age 18. She was born outside of her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for six years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for business reasons and also because her father was from one of the countries. While abroad, she attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been 11 years since she had returned from the host countries. She spoke only English fluently.

Participant 6. At the time of the interview, Participant 6 was a 33-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in two countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for six years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended boarding, international, and missionary kid schools. At the time of the interview it had been 17 years since she had returned from the host country. In addition to English, she also spoke Tok Pisin fluently.

Participant 7. At the time of the interview, Participant 7 was a 27-year-old, Black female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in two countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for seven and a half years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for military reasons. She did not specify the type of school she attended while abroad. At the time of the interview it had been 18 years since she had returned from the host country. She spoke only English fluently.

Participant 8. At the time of the interview, Participant 8 was a 20-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in two countries

prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for 13 years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been two years since she had returned from the host country. In addition to English, she also spoke Spanish fluently.

Participant 9. At the time of the interview, Participant 9 was a 30-year-old, Latina female. Her passport country is Guatemala, and she lived in four countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for twelve and a half years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious and education reasons. While abroad, she attended national schools and was also homeschooled. At the time of the interview it had been 12 years since she had returned from the host countries. In addition to English, she also spoke Spanish fluently.

Participant 10. At the time of the interview, Participant 10 was a 55-year-old, Caucasian female. Her passport country is the U.S.A, and she lived in three countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country. She lived outside of her passport country for six years prior to age 18. Her family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended local private schools. At the time of the interview it had been 50 years since she had returned from the host countries. She spoke only English fluently.

Participant 11. At the time of the interview, Participant 11 was a 37-year-old, Caucasian male. His passport country is the U.S.A, and he lived in three countries prior to age 18. He was born in his passport country. He lived outside of his passport country for 13 years prior to age 18. His family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While

abroad, he attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been 20 years since he had returned from the host countries. He spoke only English fluently.

Participant 12. At the time of the interview, Participant 12 was a 25-year-old, Caucasian male. His passport country is the U.S.A, and he lived in three countries prior to age 18. He was born outside of his passport country. He lived outside of his passport country for 16 years prior to age 18. His family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, he attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been seven years since he had returned from the host countries. He spoke only English fluently.

Participant 13. At the time of the interview, Participant 13 was a 39-year-old, Caucasian male. His passport country is the U.S.A, and he lived in three countries prior to age 18. He was born in his passport country. He lived outside of his passport country for eight years prior to age 18. His family had moved abroad for religious and education reasons. While abroad, he attended international and boarding schools. At the time of the interview it had been 21 years since he had returned from the host countries. In addition to English, he also spoke Swahili fluently.

Participant 14. At the time of the interview, Participant 14 was a 21-year-old, Caucasian male. His passport country is the U.S.A, and he lived in two countries prior to age 18. He was born in his passport country. He lived outside of his passport country for eight years prior to age 18. His family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, he attended national schools. At the time of the interview it had been three years since he had returned from the host country. In addition to English, he also spoke Spanish fluently.

Participant 15. At the time of the interview, Participant 15 was a 21-year-old, Caucasian male. His passport country is the U.S.A, and he lived in one country prior to age 18. He was born outside of his passport country. He lived outside of his passport country until he was 18 years old. His family had moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, he attended international schools. At the time of the interview it had been two years since he had returned from the host countries. In addition to English, he also spoke French and Creole fluently.

Primary Researcher

The primary researcher is a 29-year-old, Caucasian female. She holds a B.S. in developmental psychology from Warner Pacific College, Portland, Oregon. She completed a M.A. in counseling at Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana. She is currently a doctoral student at the same university. She is an adult TCK who lived in two countries prior to age 18. She was born in her passport country and lived abroad for seven years prior to age 18. Her family moved abroad for religious reasons. While abroad, she attended private and international schools. In addition to English, she spoke Spanish fluently.

Themes

This section will describe the themes that emerged through the grounded theory analysis of the transcribed interviews. There are 13 themes that emerged from the grounded theory data analysis. Each theme will be presented with the repeating ideas of the theme. Quotes by participants will follow to give the reader a better understanding of the results. A conceptual framework is provided in Table 1 to assist the reader's understanding of the organization of themes.

Table 1

Organization of Themes

Themes	
1.	<p>Broader understanding of the world and the differences of people. (100%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relate and connect to a variety of people. ▪ Understand people better. ▪ See multiple points of view. ▪ Different perspectives and understanding. ▪ Appreciation for diversity and cultures. ▪ Importance of education. ▪ Open to experiences with diversity. ▪ Development of a broader worldview and knowledge base.
2.	<p>Developing a support system of genuine relationships based on support and understanding. (100%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understanding and geographically distant support system. ▪ Making friends and the struggle to maintain those relationships. ▪ Diversity of friends in the support system. ▪ Sense of connection to others who lived outside of their passport country during developmental years. ▪ Development of genuine relationships. ▪ Desire to develop depth in close relationships. ▪ Importance of faith.
3.	<p>Development of an identity that integrates experiences and cultures. (100%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feelings about passport culture. ▪ Clarification of values. ▪ Maintaining a connection to the host cultures. ▪ Meaning of identity. ▪ Developing identities. ▪ Labeling identity. ▪ Shifting of identity. ▪ Integrating cultures.
4.	<p>Feeling misunderstood, isolated, and different from others. (100%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Experiences of being in the minority. ▪ See self as different than is typical in the passport country. ▪ Not being understood and feeling lonely. ▪ Not fitting in. ▪ Cultivating a sense of belonging. ▪ Limited support. ▪ Sense of isolation.
5.	<p>Experience resulted in opportunities and skills sets that are not traditional in the passport country. (93.3%)</p>

- Multiple languages.
- Sense of purpose in their lives.
- Impact on academic and career choices.
- 6. Challenges of returning to the passport country. (93.3%)
 - Reentry experiences.
 - Feeling different than others and not having those differences recognized by others.
 - Experiences not typical in passport country.
 - Not being familiar with the context of the passport culture.
- 7. Internal struggles in relating to others and developing effective coping skills. (86.7%)
 - Struggling with social interactions.
 - Being guarded and limiting what they share.
 - Struggles related to loss.
 - Mental health struggles.
- 8. Ability to negotiate change and a lack of fear of change. (80%)
 - Adapt easily.
 - Feeling independent, motivated, and less fearful.
 - Feeling of rootlessness.
- 9. Difference in understanding of wealth and financial management. (80%)^a
 - Understanding of finances.
 - Understanding of materialism and how to live simply.
- 10. View experience as positive and life-changing. (73.3%)
 - Positive experience.
 - Experience of living abroad was a privilege.
 - Significant and life-changing experience.
- 11. Challenges in adjusting to a different culture. (66.7%)
 - Challenges related to cultural adjustments.
 - Cultural differences experienced as a result of living abroad.
- 12. Variation in relationships with family. (66.7%)
 - Struggle in relationships with parents.
 - Not being close to extended family.
 - Being close to nuclear family.
- 13. Desire to travel and be in other places. (53.3%)
 - Interest in travel.
 - Desire to be in other locations.

Note. Percentages refer to the percentage of participants in the sample who used the theme.

^aAfter consultation with the interviewer after the first four interview, a question was added to the interview protocol. This theme emerged in response to that question.

Theme 1: Broader understanding of the world and the differences of people.

This theme is a combination of eight repeating ideas.

Development of a broader worldview and knowledge base. The first repeating idea was described by 14 participants.

Participant 9: I think it's widened my view of the world, because like I said, I have experienced different things. It's not just one reality that I know. I know different ones either through my own experience or through friends or different people that I've met. I think I'm more aware of what's going on around me surrounding the world.

Open to experiences with diversity. In the next repeating idea, seven participants described that the broader understanding has made them more open to experiences with diversity, cultures, food, and people.

Participant 7: I think I'm definitely more open to new experiences. It makes me unafraid to try new things, unafraid to try new places.

Importance of education. The repeating idea, an understanding of the importance of education, was shared by nine participants. They also discussed the type of education received and how this has been beneficial and challenging as they have tried to understand more about the world.

Participant 8: Having been just educated in the international system, you have just a broader education which has its pros and cons. You learn about the wars that went on in other countries, but sometimes you don't, like if you come back to study in the U.S. you have no idea sometimes about American history, so that can

hurt you. So that can be a con. But just the overall international education I think was very beneficial and studying with all kinds of people.

Appreciation for diversity and cultures. Nine of the participants shared that they developed an understanding of diversity and cultural sensitivity from their time living abroad.

Participant 12: I would say like the whole aspect of appreciation again.

Appreciation for other people and what they bring, and wanting to know about their culture and their background, so connecting with people of other cultures. I definitely have a strong interest and a love for other cultures. So that aspect. It makes me very interested in them, who they are, where they are from and what makes them who they are.

Different perspectives and understanding. Three participants described the next repeating idea.

Participant 6: It was a very exciting adventure and it has really made me look at things differently to kind of get outside of my own culture.

See multiple points of view. The repeating idea of being able to see multiple points of view because of having lived abroad was described by six participants. Also mentioned was being able to see their passport country more objectively.

Participant 11: It [living in another country] has made me a little skeptical about any particular position as being privileged or being right. And so I'm more often critical about things.

Understand people better. The repeating idea of being able to understand people better because of realizing cultural influences and experiences other ways of life was an idea shared by four participants.

Participant 14: I can sympathize with people. I feel like I can sympathize with the other people much more since I have lived abroad.

Relate and connect to a variety of people. The final repeating idea for the above theme was mentioned by nine participants.

Participant 2: I feel like I am able to relate to a lot of different people a lot better, and that I am able to understand, like accept people, and see them for who they are as a person because I don't have mental block that I have to get over to seeing past their differences.

Theme 2: Developing a support system of genuine relationships based on support and understanding. This theme is a combination of seven repeating ideas.

Understanding and geographically distant support system. In the first repeating idea, 11 participants shared they have a social support system of people who are understanding. The participants shared that many of their relationships are geographically distant.

Participant 2: And so my support system consists, thankfully, I think a lot of people who would understand how I think either from their own experience or from just taking the time to understand.

Participant 11: And so my social support is really through distance relationships.

Making friends and the struggle to maintain those relationships. Two participants shared the next repeating idea.

Participant 13: Yeah, slightly more than acquaintances, but not much more. I don't keep in touch with people very well. People who are very good friends, are very good friends for a time, and then when distance or experience separate us then those relationships become distant and separated. I don't maintain them very well.

Diversity of friends in the support system. A repeating idea about friends who made up the support system was described by 11 participants. They indicated that most friends are culturally diverse and those that are not are typically open to diversity.

Participant 14: Yeah it's a mixture but it's probably more people that are more culturally diverse, that are in the support system people are hanging out with more.

Sense of connection to others who lived outside of their passport country during developmental years. The next repeating idea, described by eight participants, was a sense of connection to others who had also lived abroad during their developmental years.

Participant 12: I meet another missionary kid there is just like an instant connection and we are able to share on very deep levels. So it's kind of like I am part of something bigger that I don't get to experience all the time, but when I do it's something very special because, because I am very like glad and I feel glad to be part of that.

Participant 11: But at the same time, we're connected in how we feel about our home cultures and our identities.

Development of genuine relationships. The next repeating idea was described by three participants.

Participant 15: I don't want to just be a friend who says hi every once in a while. I want to like really be your friend and like sometimes it's very standoffish to people here, they don't really understand that. So that is an aspect my personality that I've had to kind of change. I don't really like having so much of acquaintances. I would rather have a few friends and really strong bonds with them rather than, you know, just have a bunch of meaningless relationships.

Desire to develop depth in close relationships. The next repeating idea was mentioned by seven participants.

Participant 12: And I guess, like getting on to say, finding a core group of people that I feel that I am really close to, that's actually I think the difficulty that well, wherever I end up, throughout different stages of my life I have to find new people that I can connect with on a stronger, intimate basis. That's made even more difficult by my experiences and, because not everyone has experienced that; not everyone has an interest in that.

Importance of faith. The final repeating idea in the above theme was the importance that faith played as a part of the participants' support system. This idea was described by five participants.

Participant 6: I would say that it has definitely made me have to depend on the Lord more and I think has made me have a closer relationship with God because He brought me through all of the challenges.

Theme 3: Development of an identity that integrates experiences and cultures. This theme is a combination of eight repeating ideas.

Integrating cultures. In response to the questions about identity, twelve participants described integrating the cultures they lived into their identity.

Participant 12: I have this part of me that's grown up, in other cultures, so many people call us third culture kids and it really is, really like that because like I have developed my own culture out of the different places I lived. ...I take part of it and it becomes part of me and, it becomes part of that third culture and I kind of move on so I guess that's kind of an eclectic thing of, having a lot of different experiences and bringing those into who I am as well.

Shifting of identity. Seven of the participants described the next repeating idea of how their ethnic identity has shifted and changed.

Participant 6: I guess just that willingness or acceptance of the fact that I'll never really be able to say that I'm 100% Texan or that I'm 100% Minnesotan. I'm never going to have any one culture anywhere where I really belong. Just that flexibility to be like, I'm a little bit of all of them and just kind of take the good things and be able to recognize how there were good things here that shaped me and these memories, or these things I learned from it and just take the good from all the different little places. Kind of make it like a little crazy quilt- put all this together and it's me.

Labeling identity. In the next repeating idea of the above theme, six of the participants described trying to label their identity in terms of a national identity.

Participant 3: So I would identify as American with a very international bias.

Developing identities. Another repeating idea that emerged was trying to develop their identities and finding themselves. This was mentioned by five of the participants

Participant 12: For sure because sometimes I would feel like I needed to push it away, I would feel like I needed to fit in more with the people around me, then I would feel like I needed to accept my background more. It was kind of like this push and pull trying to find that happy medium or that balance between feeling lonely or pushing away and feeling accepted. That was definitely a big challenge with that.

Participant 4: ...it's like, oh my gosh, who am I, is there any part of me that it is formed, can I explain any part of who I am. I think, part of, when I think of those experiences and how they affect me today, and how they formed who I am. I guess I think about finding myself along the way

Meaning of identity. In the next repeating idea, nine participants discussed what identity came to mean to them and how they understood their own identities.

Participant 4: So there's all different aspects of identity. You know, like what is it, nationality or faith based or whatever. So, that's a really hard one to put into words, but I think it's kind of a quilt made up of lots of different little patches and collectively that's me. It's different textures and colors and shapes and sizes and that's what makes up me and other people who have experiences like mine.

Interviewer: it's not one thing that you can describe your identity as, it's kind of a collection of all these things from all the cultures you've lived in this sounds like.

Participant 4: Yeah, I think that would be a true statement, yes.

Maintaining a connection to the host cultures. The following repeating idea, mentioned by seven participants, was how the participants maintained a connection to the host cultures as a part of integrating cultures in their identities.

Participant 4: so talking about it [integrating cultures into identity], that's a big part of it. I think my home is full of just experiences and pictures and artifacts from these different places, and so that's a, visually being able to see those things is a part of my identity, being reminded of who I am.

Interviewer: So it sounds like kind of continuing not to forget those experiences and integrating new ones is kind of how you've integrated them.

Participant 4: Right.

Clarification of values. In the next repeating idea of the above theme, five participants described how living abroad had helped them to clarify the things that they valued and how this influenced their identity.

Participant 1: I think it's affected it a lot, specifically let's see. How do I want to word this? I think the primary way is that it has made me more, I don't know if I can say this clearly, but, it has made me more clear on what my values are.

Because I had to, when I came to America, decide who I was, what I believed, and how I wanted to be. You can change from I don't live there anymore, now I'm over here and I can be who I want to be and, but you decide who am I, and if people question well who are you? You are so weird, so odd, so different. This is who I am. So I think I am much more defined on who I am and why I am the way I am, what I believe, because I had to define myself early on when I came to America, when I came back. So I think that is one of the things from my identity

point of view, who I am even today. I think I value as well has to do with where I grew up and how I grew up.

Feelings about passport culture. In the final repeating idea of the above theme, seven participants shared about their feelings about and resistance to their passport culture.

Participant 11: ...for the longest time I was fairly anti-American [the passport country] and now I'm not. I've gotten over that at least.

Theme 4: Feeling misunderstood, isolated, and different. This theme is a combination of seven repeating ideas.

Cultivating a sense of belonging. This repeating idea, described by seven participants, is about feeling as though they do not belong to any country, feelings about trying to resolve that and the benefits of the resolution.

Participant 12: Yeah like, finding home, really for me. Finding where I belong and I feel like I have a lot of different interests in different areas in different parts of the world, but finding that place that I belong or that I feel like I can call home.

Participant 6: I can't really say that there was ever a time when any culture has accepted me as being one of the norm, like oh yeah, you're one of us; you're the norm of our culture.

Not fitting in. The next repeating idea was described by six participants as a sense of not fitting in, whether it be with people, cultures, or even with life experiences.

Participant 13: and never really at home anywhere. ...And I have, you know I have been working in the States for 20 years and never really feel very, totally comfortable and at home here.

Interviewer: And maybe not fitting in anywhere completely.

Participant 13: Exactly.

Not being understood and feeling lonely. The next repeating idea was described by seven of the participants.

Participant 13: I think that sense of isolation in the midst of the crowd was very true for me.and until I figured out a way to live that way or, build on that and to turn that into a positive, it was very much a negative. I really felt alone. I felt not only misunderstood, but un-understandable. I didn't think there was even a way to tell my story that people could identify with me or share a common language, and so just felt really alone.

See self as different than is typical in the passport country. The next repeating idea was described by two participants.

Participant 9: That's another thing that going back to Guatemala that really set me apart because people there are very family focused. They do a lot of things with their family. I'm not like that. That's not something that I would want to do. It's just I didn't grow up that way. Family is important but not that important, like extended family anyway.

Experiences of being in the minority. The next repeating idea of the above theme was described by four participants.

Participant 8: Well, as I was like saying before about realizing that I was the minority growing up in Bolivia, sometimes it's hard, especially when Hispanic people don't understand how much I relate to their culture, love their culture. Sometimes I feel very looked down upon when I try to make friends with

Hispanics or join those circles. I know that at my high school in Florida sometimes it was so hard to penetrate those walls of just prejudice. Because as I said you look at me and I look so American and it was almost like I was faking it, trying to be their friend and listen to their same music and things like that. So that has been hard, and not just Hispanics judging me on that, but also other people just automatically because you look American you must think and act like all other Americans. And that's been hard, and I'm getting over that now with age and maturity. You realize that that doesn't bother you as much because if people want to they'll take the time to get to know you.

Limited support. The next repeating idea was described by four participants.

They indicated that they have small groups of friends and at times feel as though they may need additional support.

Participant 1: There are times when I feel like, I wish I had just one other friend. ...I think if I look at my social support system, it is very small. I don't have a lot of people.

Sense of isolation. The final repeating idea of this theme is a sense of isolation because of not connecting with people, whether because of cultural differences or lack of technology. This repeating idea was described by six participants

Participant 6: Even individuals have become more independent like I don't need any other individual, I can just be an island unto myself. I guess I just maybe think that because of just maybe feeling a little bit isolated here in the United States sometimes.

Theme 5: Experience resulted in opportunities and skills sets that are not traditional in the passport country. This theme is a combination of three repeating ideas.

Impact on academic and career choices. In the first repeating idea of this theme, 14 of the participants discussed the impact living abroad had on their academic and career choices. They also discussed some of the challenges from having lived abroad, including not knowing about academic choices and frequently making changes in academic or career decisions.

Participant 3: It definitely affected what I care about academically and what I want to do with my academic career in the future.

Participant 4: Honestly, I can see myself doing several different things. I think the way in which I am moving ahead is figuring out what I am passionate about and where I'm gifted, and really developing and honing in on those skills and seeing where that leads me.

Sense of purpose in their lives. The next repeating idea was described by eight participants. They shared that their experience of living abroad set them apart and helped to feel a sense of purpose in their lives.

Participant 15: I think that it will really set me apart, because I have experienced what a lot of people have not experienced.

Participant 14: ... everything matters in the sense of more purpose in my life I guess.

Multiple languages. The final repeating idea of this theme was identified by four participants who described the value of being able to speak multiple languages.

Participant 15: And just having a different language that I speak fluently helps me to, like right now I am learning Spanish in college and I have been able to move very quickly through it, because I have already had another language.

Participant 8: That's another bridge that can be created between other people if you understand their heart language.

Theme 6: Challenges of returning to the passport country. This theme is a combination of four repeating ideas.

Reentry experiences. The first repeating idea, described by 13 participants was about the reentry experience to their passport country. Participants described it as a confusing time in which they were trying to understand and learn how to function in the passport country. Participants also noted that although the experience was difficult, many of the feelings passed.

Participant 12: It felt like the rug had been pulled out from underneath my feet and I was just kind of spinning through space almost not knowing which end was pardon me I mean I literally- I didn't know which end was up like which direction. I didn't know what normal was anymore because I had moved back to the US and that was in my new home.

Feeling different than others and not having those differences recognized by others. Four participants described the next repeating idea.

Participant 15: I think the hardest part about it for me is that like my skin color is white, I'm just like everyone else here, and I don't stand out. But I am not, you know, I grew up in another country, but no one really knows that. So, it's kind of hard because people assume something or they assume you do this or you do that

and they don't understand that you know. They often forget. Like my friends even, my roommates who live with me they often forget that, oh he grew up in Haiti, he probably doesn't understand this; just because like I am not, my skin color isn't black, you know, and so they often forget that like I am basically Haitian almost.

Experiences not typical in passport country. Eight of the participants described the next repeating idea of not having had experiences that are considered typical in their passport countries.

Participant 15: I think it has set me back a lot like, I didn't get to experience a lot of things that people got to experience here, I mean like organized sports and you know, like outdoor activities and just being able to go to the park or, just things like that. We never really had that kind of, so I got to miss out on a lot of that. A lot of like just your high school activities, like your proms or homecomings. Just simple things like that, I never really got to participate in. It set me back, just kind of culturally. When I first moved here, I mean I didn't know hardly anything technology-wise, things like that, so it really kind of set me back a little bit.

Not being familiar with the context of the passport culture. In the final repeating idea of the above theme, eight of the participants described not being familiar with the context of the culture, including pop culture.

Participant 14: Sometimes just understanding the context in which they're talking and relating some of the experiences I do find hard to deal with. It's like, okay can you explain that to me. I probably should know it. So sometimes I feel lost,

lost in a maze because my life was spent two places. Sometimes I don't have a total on the grasp on what they're talking about.

Participant 8: I'm still intimidated by a lot of pop culture and a lot of stuff that influences the American society just because I'm not, I don't know anything about pop culture like the latest movie or actors and actresses doing this and that.

Theme 7: Internal struggles in relating to others and developing effective coping skills. This theme is a combination of four repeating ideas.

Struggling with social interactions. Seven participants described struggling with social interactions. Specifically, they noted that they have to think more about how to interact with people, what is acceptable, and the context when responding to people.

Participant 2: I have to think a little harder with some social cues because I am a mixture of two cultures.

Being guarded and limiting what they share. The next repeating idea was shared by five participants.

Participant 11: I think it's maybe more introverted, a little more guarded about, just about relationships and about what you're talking about and trying to find a way to have small talk and without ruffling feathers. It takes more calculation and more self-restraint than I think most people do.

Struggles related to loss. Six participants discussed the struggles in losing relationships, leaving countries, and missing other aspects of cultures.

Participant 4: Another huge part of it is loss. I mean, having to move from place to place, you have to say goodbye to so many people, and that is so wearying, it can be crippling to the point, like I said where you throw up that wall and never

ever want to have to experience loss again. So there is huge amounts of grief that me and others like me have to experience and walk through in order to be able to pull out the good.

Mental health struggles. Even though the final repeating idea of the above theme was identified by only two participants, this may be an issue for TCKs. These participants shared that their experience of living abroad contributed to some mental health struggles.

Participant 8: but I think that in my experiences and from a lot of my classmates experiences who went through different traumas and stuff, it feels like all of us ended up having more psychological problems, things like Posttraumatic Stress Disorder or things like that. It's just a way higher incidence that it is with normal kids who've just grown up in their home country. It feels like so many of them have either been traumatized really bad or have developed really unhealthy coping mechanisms to like prevent themselves from being traumatized

Theme 8: Ability to negotiate change and a lack of fear of change. This theme is a combination of three repeating ideas.

Adapt easily. In the first repeating idea, eight participants shared that they feel they are able to adapt easily to cultures and situations as a result of having lived abroad.

Participant 13: I feel very blessed to be able to, to navigate change maybe more efficiently than my colleagues. I feel very comfortable in change and with difference whether it's cultural or socioeconomic or, ethnic or whatever I feel very much at home in the differences between people. I feel really blessed for that, because you know, we are a different people, there is a lot of difference and

so I feel really lucky that I am pretty comfortable in places where a lot of people are really uncomfortable.

Feeling independent, motivated, and less fearful. Four participants described the next repeating idea.

Participant 11: And I just am very independent too. You know, I was traveling through different countries in my teens so there's a lot that I'm just like, ok, I can do this on my own, and that's hard in relationships, there needs to be give and take. So when you're used to doing things on your own it's harder to kind of join in with other people on that.

Feeling of rootlessness. The final repeating idea of the above theme was described by five participants. They shared that they have a feeling of rootlessness, in that they are used to not being geographically close to support networks, not having a home town, and experiencing mobility.

Participant 11: So this feeling of rootlessness, which is again a tradeoff, I don't feel that I'm tied or bound to any particular place; which gives me a lot of freedom and flexibility and, I was thinking again the context of identity, and so I feel I can move between different social groups and different settings fairly easily but I'm not entirely at home in any one of them. So that's the tradeoff.

Theme 9: Difference in understanding of wealth and financial management.

This theme is a combination of two repeating ideas in response to a question that was added to the interview protocol following consultation with the interviewer after the first four interviews.

Understanding of finances. The first repeating idea was described by nine participants.

Participant 5: I don't think it really allowed me to understand my finances that much. Obviously the money system is different and they didn't really have, I didn't have a bank account or anything. I mainly got what my parents gave me, and I didn't have a job. I wasn't able to have a job. So I wasn't able to start learning how to budget my money and all that kind of stuff. So I really didn't start that until after I came back over here.

Understanding of materialism and how to live simply. The final repeating idea in the above theme was described by seven participants.

Participant 14: I definitely grew up just knowing that I could have a really good life without spending all the money on it or doing a lot of stuff.

Participant 10: I think the issues of poverty are pretty important to me. The excessive focus and concentration on things, earning great big sums of money and that sort of thing are of concern to me and bother me.

Theme 10: View experience as positive and life-changing. This theme is a combination of three repeating ideas.

Positive experience. In the first repeating idea, 10 participants indicated that living abroad during their developmental years was a positive experience that they viewed as beneficial.

Participant 10: I just think back on those years, and I mentioned this earlier, I think back on those years with really great, great joy. To a great extent I would love to live like that again.

Experience of living abroad was a privilege. In the next repeating idea of this theme, four of the participants specified that they believed the experience of living abroad was a privilege.

Participant 12: So I really, I hold that pretty high importance, and I really I am glad of the experiences I have had. So I am happy to be like, I am proud I guess I would say of how, how I've gotten to grow up and the different things that made me who I am. I am glad when people want to understand something about that, might ask me about growing up in other countries, what I learned about certain places. I am just very kind of proud of that experience.

Significant and life-changing experience. The final repeating idea of this theme was described by five participants. They shared their perception that living abroad was significant and life-changing for them.

Participant 4: I would say that it has had a profound influence on my life and those are probably some of the years that shaped me the most.

Interviewer: ...changed in you in a significant way it sounds like.

Participant 4: Oh, absolutely, yes, very much so.

Theme 11: Challenges in adjusting to a different culture. This theme is a combination of two repeating ideas.

Challenges related to cultural adjustments. There were 10 participants that described challenges of adjusting to different cultures. Some of the challenges described were culture shock, learning languages, being homesick, having mixed feelings, and not having friends in the new location.

Participant 4: ...like honeymoon stage the first few months you're in a new area and everything is great, and then you kind of start settling in and you're like wow I'm really far away from what I know and understand. And I'm unable to communicate on a basic level, or deeper level, or whatever. So I think the more time you spend, the more you realize how much you don't fit in, but as time goes on then you have an opportunity to start working on that.

Cultural differences experienced as a result of living abroad. The second repeating idea of this theme, described by eight participants, was specific cultural differences that the participants had experienced as a result of living abroad. Some of the differences described included laws (e.g., drinking age), personal space, sense of time, social norms (e.g., methods to greet people), cultural values (e.g., relationships, accomplishment of tasks), and attitudes people in the host country expressed about the passport country.

Participant 15: I mean it was very tough at times, it was very hard. I mean we didn't live like most people do here in the States. It was kind of a rough living, but it was definitely worth it and I mean I didn't really realize that it was that rough until I moved here.

Participant 3: So it's kind of weird telling my friends, I have to go home, and yeah, we have a guard there, but it's not weird in Haiti, but in the States when I talk to my friends. So it's definitely a different mentality, and like, Can we go to the beach this week? I don't know. Are they having riots?

Theme 12: Variation in relationships with family. This theme is a combination of three repeating ideas.

Struggle in relationships with parents. In the first repeating idea, two participants described that living abroad contributed to struggling in their relationships with their parents.

Participant 11: ... I think my relationship with my parents was far more strained than it would have been if I weren't living abroad because they were sort of the source of the difficulty in my life during that entire period.

Not being close to extended family. The second repeating idea, mentioned by four participants, was that living abroad resulted in not being close to their extended families.

Participant 7: The only drawback I did have was I never really got to know my extended family. Growing up you hear that you have grandparents, but when you never see them, don't see them for like 8 years of your life, it's kind of hard in coming back and say "oh, here are the people that are your family", and you're like, "ok". So that's just never been a bond that we've been able to feel. I think that's due to our living abroad.

Being close to nuclear family. The final repeating idea of the above theme was described by eight participants. They described that living abroad brought their nuclear families closer together because they spent a lot of time together and learned to rely on each other.

Participant 7: As far as my immediate family, it definitely brought us closer.

Theme 13: Desire to travel and be in other places. This theme is a combination of two repeating ideas.

Interest in travel. The first repeating idea was shared by six participants.

Participant 11: I maintain an interest in traveling a lot.

Desire to be in other locations. Four participants noted a desire to be in other locations than where they were presently.

Participant 5: Feeling that no matter where you go there'll always be that part of you that will wish you were the other place.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of adult Third Culture Kids. This chapter has provided descriptions of the participants and primary researcher. The 13 themes that emerged based on the interviews with the participants were presented along with the repeating ideas that comprised each theme. Each repeating idea and theme was created to include the important information provided by the participants. In the following chapter, these themes will be discussed in relation to theoretical constructs to develop a theory about the experiences of Third Culture Kids.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of adult TCKs through a qualitative semi-structured interview. This chapter represents the final stage of the grounded theory methodology (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003). The results presented in the previous chapter will be further examined through theoretical constructs grounded in the data of this study. Implications for research and limitations of this study will also be addressed.

According to Pollock and Van Reken (2001), individuals who grow up outside of their passport country prior to age 18 are TCKs. They indicate that it is during these developmental years of birth to 18 years of age that these individuals are affected by the experience that has significant effect on the rest of their lives. To contribute to the literature and generate a coherent understanding of the experiences of TCKs, the researcher generated four research questions for the study: (a) How does the TCK experience impact the experience of cultural adjustment? (b) Has the TCK experience affected the individual's worldview, and if so, how? (c) How has the TCK experience impacted the individual's sense of identity? (d) How does the TCK experience affect perceived social support? These questions were set aside during the data analysis portion of the study to allow for the theory to emerge from the data and will be reexamined in this chapter. Additionally these questions were used in the following section to develop the theoretical constructs.

Theoretical Constructs

The final stage of grounded theory requires that the themes presented in the previous chapter be grouped into theoretical constructs that help to explain the experiences of TCKs. The theoretical constructs were developed by considering how the themes are related on a more abstract level. The themes were grouped together and then named utilizing the literature in the field and general knowledge that explained the organizing principles (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). These theoretical constructs are supported by the repeating ideas and themes that emerged from the previous stages of data analysis. There are six theoretical constructs that build the theory of the experiences of TCKs: (a) Development of a global perspective, (b) affirmation of the complexity of relationships, (c) struggle to achieve cultural efficacy, (d) confirmation of the value of the experience, (e) challenge of acculturation, and (f) change as a source of achieving equilibrium. The following is a proposal of the relationships between the themes presented in the previous chapter.

Development of a global perspective. The results of this study demonstrated that one part of the experience of TCKs is the development of a global perspective. This global perspective has two major themes: (a) Broader understanding of the world and the differences of people and (b) difference in understanding of wealth and financial management. These two themes are about how TCKs have developed a global perspective as a result of growing up outside of their passport countries. All of the participants mentioned how their worldview had been broadened and allowed them to view things in a different manner than many of their peers in the passport country. For

example, Participant 11 explained the experience of having a broadened worldview and being able to understand other points of view:

I guess the jarring experience of being confronted with mindsets and frame of reference very different from your own and how that makes everything feel a little bit more alive and cast your assumptions into release. And I think it raises some thoughts and some questions that, to my mind, deepen your understanding a great deal.

This idea of seeing the world differently was also reflected in their understandings of wealth and financial management. For example, Participant 10 stated, “I think the issues of poverty are pretty important to me. The excessive focus and concentration on things, earning great big sums of money and that sort of thing are of concern to me and bother me.” This was an important theme that emerged early in the interviewing process. The original set of interview questions did not inquire about this topic and after consultation with the interviewer after the first four interviews, a question was added to ensure that this area was not neglected in evaluating the experiences of TCKs.

This theoretical construct of developing a global perspective also directly addressed the second research question. Results indicated that the worldviews of TCKs are impacted by their experiences. That data suggested that TCKs gained a broadened perspective of different mindsets that assist them in understanding the world and how others may see and understand the world differently. This seems to happen through exposure to multiple cultures, openness to experiences and people, recognition that there are other ways to view and understand the world and people, and education about a variety of topics and cultures. Some of the experiences that the data indicated have an

affect are: interacting with different understandings of how to live, the value of money, and the perception of materialism.

Schaetti (2000) identified a broadened worldview as a common experience to all TCKs, and these results support this recognition. These results also supported that TCKs develop a three-dimensional worldview because the world is tangible for them, as opposed to a two-dimensional worldview in which the world is observed (Pollock & Van Reken, 2001). The data from the present study indicated that the participants developed this three-dimensional worldview through living in different countries and building relationships with people from various countries who also may have experienced living in a multitude of countries. It is through this exposure to a multicultural world that they incorporate a broadened, experience-based view of the world into their personal worldview. These interactions assist TCKs to understand the world based on experience rather than only observations from a distance.

Further, Cottrell (1999) noted that TCKs are interested in international issues, a finding supported in these results as well. The interests in international issues included staying informed about countries they had lived in, international news, and learning about the diversity of people and their experiences. The participants discussed how their global perspective provided them with attentiveness to events that were happening throughout the world. This attentiveness developed from their experiences of living internationally and also from their relationships with people who live in a variety of countries. Additionally, participants noted their understanding that the world is connected, despite international borders, led to a sense of responsibility for being aware of issues occurring throughout the world.

Affirmation of the complexity of relationships. Another part of the experience of TCKs has to do with the complexity of relationships they develop. This affirmation of the complexity of relationships had three themes that indicated this was an important part of the experience of TCKs: (a) developing a support system of genuine relationships based on support and understanding, (b) internal struggles in relating to others and developing effective coping skills, and (c) variations in relationships with family. Not only are relationships with others impacted by the TCKs' experiences, but also the kind of relationships and how they try to relate to others is affected. Many of the participants noted that developing a support system of people who understood the TCK experience was important to them. These participants were interested in developing genuine and deep relationships, including other TCKs, family and friends, as a way of managing their experiences. Additionally, the data suggested that faith and relationship with God were important as a part of the support systems.

The challenges of building and maintaining relationships for many of the participants were manifested by limiting what information they share with others, developing the kinds of relationships they desired, and interpreting cultural social cues and rules. The data also indicated that developing coping skills to manage the complexity of relationships was an important component of the TCK experience. Some participants noted that their experiences included loss, grief, and mental health challenges that more complicated building relationships with others.

Additionally, the results indicated that participants' family relationships are affected by the experience of living abroad during their developmental years. Participants noted that they develop close relationships with their nuclear family;

however, for some participants, the experience of living abroad also seemed to create additional struggles in the relationship with their parents. These relationship factors must also be considered within a developmental framework. It is not clear if it is the TCK experience, typical development, or a combination of these two that has an impact on these relationships. The evolution of a close relationship with the nuclear family and struggles in relating to parents are possibly normal developmental issues rather than issues that may be specific to the TCK experience. Additionally, participants noted that relationships with extended family were complicated because the participants were geographically distant from them, which they suggested led to struggles in developing a connection and relationship with the extended family.

The theoretical construct of affirmation of the complexity of relationships addressed the fourth research question. The data suggested that TCKs understood their support systems to be genuine and deep relationships with people who understand their experiences. Additionally, the data demonstrated that developing these support systems was challenging for TCKs. These challenges emerged from feeling misunderstood and isolated, dealing with grief and loss, and experiencing mental health challenges. Moreover, participants described being unsure of social norms, hesitating to build relationships based on past experiences with loss, and struggling to find those with similar experiences. The data also indicated that family may be an important part of TCKs support systems, and that this may be exaggerated because of the experience of living abroad and learning to depend on the nuclear family for support.

These results lend support to Schaetti's (2000) indication that complex relationships are a common experience for all TCKs. She noted that TCKs tended to be

reserved in relationships, and this was borne out in the findings of this study that some of the participants limited what they shared with others. For example, Participant 9 shared, “Although I am open to meet different people and everything, I don’t share a lot of my very personal self with them.” The finding that TCKs developed close relationships with family and siblings (Gerner, 1992) was supported in the results of this study. This study also partially supported McLachlan’s finding (2005) that the closeness of the family helped to manage the transience of international mobility, but the results of this study did not specify that family helped them to cope with mobility. Participants noted that family was important as a source of support in managing the challenges they experienced.

Less than half of the participants indicated that issues of loss and grief were a part of their experiences as TCKs. This may be due to how participants think about grief and loss or because it is not a significant issue for many TCKs. For some, the idea of loss and grief may have been integrated into other areas of their discussions without formally referring to the topic (e.g., discussing the challenges of building a support system). Gilbert (2008) found that TCKs experienced disenfranchised grief for a variety of losses. The possibility that the experience of disenfranchised grief inhibited the participants’ expressions of grief and loss, may, in turn, contribute to the findings of this study.

Struggle to achieve cultural efficacy. The next important element of the experiences of TCKs found in this study was the struggle to achieve cultural efficacy. The major themes of the struggle to achieve cultural efficacy found in this study were: (a) development of an identity that integrates experiences and cultures, and (b) feeling misunderstood, isolated, and different from others. These themes relate to developing an understanding of the self and a sense of that self being misunderstood by others, resulting

in feeling misunderstood and alone. All the participants indicated that the struggle for identity was common.

The theoretical construct of the struggle to achieve cultural efficacy directly addressed the third research question. Results indicated that the development of a sense of identity was affected by their experience of living outside of their passport countries during their developmental years. The data suggested that the identity strain was related to an understanding of where they were from and how the multiple cultures they experienced influence their sense of self. Erikson theorized that identity is a major developmental task that occurs during the adolescent years (Erikson, 1980), and if people are not able to determine one cohesive understanding of their identity, then they are faced with identity confusion.

There also seemed to be an identity development process for TCKs in which their understanding of identity shifts over time. Initially, their understanding of identity is linked to their passport country. This understanding of identity shifts as they recognize they are not a typical representation of the passport country. The evolution that takes place in this process results in a broader understanding of identity moving from the passport country to a recognition of identity as the values of the individual and the understanding of one's self.

This shift demonstrates characteristics that are described in the Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development (OTAID; Myers et al., 1991). This theory presents six phases of identity. Phase 0, Absence of Conscious Awareness, represents a lack of awareness of identity that is most often associated with infancy. Phase 1, Individuation, represents a lack of awareness of the impact society has had on the individual. Phase 2,

Dissonance, is when people begin to recognize that there may be some distance between themselves and others and they begin to explore their identity. This is when TCKs recognize that they are different and begin to explore what identity means for them. In this phase identity based on nationality becomes salient and is frequently the starting point for TCKs in their identity development. In Phase 3, Immersion, the individual has a sense of pride in a subculture group membership and embraces others like them that are devalued. For TCKs, this may result in an awareness of the TCK population and a desire to be connected to this group. In Phase 4, Internalization, the individual has a sense of security based on feelings of worth they have incorporated into their identity. In Phase 5, Integration, there is an understanding that the self contributes to the person's view of world and the individual accepts others not based on those views rather than appearance. In Phase 6, Transformation, the individual views his or her life as directly related to their cultural foundations. This identity development process seems to reflect the shift in identity that participants described in this study.

Additionally, the results of this study indicated that there was an attempt at what Lafromboise et al. (1993) recognized as bicultural efficacy. The idea that it is possible to live in multiple cultures without compromising one's cultural identity seemed to be a belief evident in these results; however, it seemed that the participants were struggling with an integration of how this was accomplished. Adolescence and early adulthood is a time spent trying to identify and implement one's own beliefs and values. When more than one culture is involved in this process, determining identity can be difficult. The results suggested that the participants have grappled with developing an understanding of their identity and this has led to feelings of being different, which supported the findings

of Raschio (1987) that challenges arise when TCKs feel different from others. The findings of this study proposed that these struggles are often emotional and relational.

It is here that the interaction of the theoretical constructs becomes evident. These results suggested that identity development of TCKs was evidenced by their ability to feel understood and connected with others. Schaetti (2000) suggested that TCKs are reserved in their relationships; this may be due to feeling as though their self-identity was not accepted by others. Additionally, she discussed that cultural orientation was the way TCKs integrate their experiences of change, relationship, and worldview. In light of Schaetti's conclusion and the results of this study, identity resolution may be the essential piece for TCKs in integrating their experiences and achieving a sense of validation and understanding.

Confirmation of the value of the experience. In this study, participants confirmed that living abroad during their developmental years was a valuable experience. This theoretical construct is represented by two themes: (a) view experience as positive and life-changing and (b) experience resulted in opportunities and skills sets that are not traditional in the passport country. Throughout the interviews with the participants it seemed important to them to stress the positive aspects of their experiences. This was demonstrated through explicitly stating that the experience was valuable and additionally identifying skills and opportunities they felt set them apart in a positive way.

Although none of the research questions for this study directly addressed this theoretical construct, the data confirmed the experience of growing up outside their passport country during their developmental years was valuable and important to the participants. This may be a result of seeing the impact of the experience in various areas

of their lives on a regular basis. For example, the data revealed that the participants' experiences of living abroad had an impact on academic and career decisions, including areas studied and career opportunities. This may be attributed to their broader understanding of their worldview in terms of academic and career pursuits. Participants shared that they chose to study international business, political science, math, science, broadcasting, education, language, and religion. Participants also indicated that integrating an international component in their work was done by selecting a field of work that has an international element, traveling, or utilizing other languages, which supported the findings by Cottrell and Useem (1999) that most TCKs integrated an international component into their occupations. Several participants noted that their academic and career choices have changed several times. Additionally, several participants noted that their experiences in an educational system abroad limited their knowledge of academic and career options.

Challenge of acculturation. Another theoretical construct that emerged from the data was the challenge of acculturation. There were two major themes that formed this theoretical construct: (a) challenges in adjusting to a different culture and (b) challenges of returning to the passport country. These two themes are about the challenges the participants faced as they maneuvered through cultures, including understanding cultural differences, learning languages, and recognition of differences in values. The data demonstrated that acculturating was a challenge that was a common experience for the participants. Also of note were the challenges the participants faced when they returned to their passport countries (e.g., reentry, not being familiar with pop culture).

This theoretical construct addressed the first research question. Results indicated that the experience of living outside of the passport country during the developmental years had an impact on how the participants experience cultural adjustment. Participants described acculturation to the host culture and the passport country. They noted that the experience of returning to their passport country was challenging because of the reentry experience, but also because they did not have experiences with and knowledge of popular culture that are considered typical in the passport country. Additionally, they indicated that it was challenging to adjust to the passport country because they often have acquired cultural habits of the host country (e.g., sense of time, personal space, and values). The results of this study supported the findings of Huff (2001) that reentry is difficult for TCKs as a result of not identifying with the passport country.

These descriptions seem related to Berry's (1980) acculturation strategies of assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. These strategies are based on the connection people wish to maintain with their heritage culture and the degree of contact with people outside of their group. In the assimilation strategy, the person does not wish to maintain their heritage culture and seeks close interaction with other cultures. In the separation strategy the person values their heritage culture and avoids interaction with other groups. In the integration strategy the person is interested in maintaining their heritage culture and interacting with other groups. In the marginalization strategy the person has little interest in the heritage culture or interacting with other groups.

Participants in this study described experiencing a variety of strategies at different times throughout their acculturation processes. These strategy choices also seem to be related to identity development discussed earlier. For example, a person who may be in

Immersion is likely to use either assimilation or separation depending on which culture the individual identifies. The data from this study supported Berry's (2003) finding that the most preferred strategy seems to be integration, as the participants described the efforts they made to integrate the cultures they had experienced in to their identity and everyday lives.

Change as a source of achieving equilibrium. The final theoretical construct that emerged from the data, change as a source of achieving equilibrium, is comprised of two themes: (a) desire to travel and be in other places and (b) ability to negotiate change and a lack of fear of change. These two themes concern how the participants have developed a sense of stability and equilibrium in being comfortable with travel and different locations, learning to adapt, being independent, and having freedom from being tied to any one particular location. For these participants, comfort evolved from change. The data suggest these participants were comfortable with the unknown that changes bring, and additionally they have developed skills to be able to effectively manage changes that occur.

Although this theoretical construct was not addressed by the research questions, the results indicated this is an important element of the participants' experience. Schaetti (2000) and this study's results both identified change as a common experience to all TCKs. Additionally, the results supported the theme of rootlessness that has been identified in the TCK literature. Cottrell and Useem (1999) reported that rootlessness was a continuous feeling for TCKs, which the results corroborated.

Implications for the Study

The scant research available at the time of this study had methodological problems that inhibited the contributions to the literature about TCKs. This study provided a conceptual framework for the experiences of TCKs based on research methodology that has been detailed to allow readers to evaluate the results on their own. This study explored the overall experience that living abroad prior to age 18 had on participants and also included an evaluation of the reentry process. The results indicated that TCKs' experiences contribute to long-term effects in their lives. This study provides a foundation for further exploration and understanding of the TCK experiences.

Research implications. Most of the TCKs involved in this study were Caucasian, from the U.S.A, and went abroad for religious reasons. Given the potential diversity of TCKs, future research studies should consider including participants with greater racial and passport country diversity, as well as purposes for going abroad. The inclusion of these diverse samples will provide an opportunity to explore how these characteristics may affect the experiences of TCKs and also to explore the common characteristics of TCKs. Inclusion of participants with a variety of reasons for going abroad will also be important for future research to explore if these reasons affect the experiences of TCKs.

Additionally, future research studies should focus on the individual themes that evolved in this study to gain a rich understanding of each element of the experience. The themes of this study will serve as a foundation to guide future research toward the development of assessment tools for TCKs. Future researchers might incorporate mixed methods approaches to allow for greater generalizability of results and additionally lead

to further directions of the TCK research. Questions that might be explored include how TCKs differ from non-TCKs for each of the themes that emerged in this study.

Practice implications. Given that many TCKs reenter the passport country for college, the practitioners who are involved with university counseling centers and student services should be aware of issues for this population and consider how the TCK experience may affect adjustment to college. Additionally, understanding the term TCK will provide valuable knowledge in assisting practitioners in their work with TCKs. For those practitioners who work with this population in any setting, it is important to address the themes that have evolved in this study in assessing TCKs. Clinicians will want to ask specific questions about the TCK experience and how it has affected the presenting issues of clients (e.g., How has your experience as a TCK affected your experience in developing a support system?) Clinicians should also consider the intensity and long-term impact that the TCK experience can add to developmental concerns (e.g., adjustment, identity, feelings of being different). In accordance with practicing in a multiculturally competent manner, clinicians should be sensitive to cultural differences and ensure that TCK clients feel understood and supported.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations, some of which are intrinsic to the qualitative methodology. First, the participants in this study represent a convenience sample selected because of their willingness and availability to participate. Participants were primarily Caucasian, from the U.S.A., and had gone abroad for religious reasons. An additional limitation is the sample size ($n=15$). These two factors influence the generalizability of the results. Only individuals who were at least 19 years of age, had

spent at least one year living outside of the passport country prior to age 18, and had returned to the passport country for at least one year were eligible for this study, thus excluding individuals younger than 19 years of age, those who may have lived outside of their passport country prior to age 18 for less than one year, or those individuals who had either not reentered their passport country or had done so for less than one year. The greater diversity of the research pool may have contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the experience of third culture kids.

The second limitation of this study is the possibility of extraneous contextual factors that may have affected the participants' responses. An example of this is one participant who was commuting back to her home from work during the interview. This may have affected her responses to the questions that were asked. Additionally, there may have been other unidentified factors and challenges that influenced the information the participants chose to share or withhold.

The third limitation is the researcher's bias. The researcher's beliefs and biases have influenced this study because, although the meanings and interpretations of the data are based on the data findings, the primary researcher's perceptions and insights were used in the analysis process. To account for this, the researcher recruited a research team without prior knowledge of this population to conduct the data collection and first stages of data analysis. Additionally, the researcher maintained a journal to contribute to the trustworthiness of the results by monitoring her reactions and biases throughout the data analysis.

A final limitation is that participants had to rely on their memories of their experiences. The participants' memories could have been affected by extraneous

variables. This could result in important aspects that were not reported due to lapses in memory.

Conclusion

The experience of growing up outside of the passport country during the developmental years provides TCKs with encounters of culture and opportunities that generate unique experiences. It is through these experiences that they develop a global perspective and interpret their lives. The experience was confirmed as valuable and influential; however, unique challenges in the complexity of relationships, acculturation and struggling to achieve cultural efficacy are also evident. TCKs develop skill sets that can benefit them in coming to terms with their experience, including utilizing change as a source to achieve equilibrium in their lives.

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Appendix A

IRB Letter of Approval



Institutional Review Board

DATE: April 1, 2009

TO: Elizabeth Sellers

FROM: Ball State University IRB

RE: IRB protocol # 111205-1
 TITLE: Exploration of Themes Evolving from the Experiences of Third Culture Kids
 SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project

ACTION: DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
 DECISION DATE: April 1, 2009

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on April 1, 2009 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact Amy Boos at (765) 285-5034 or akboos@bsu.edu if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

Appendix B

Letter of Introduction to Participants

Dear Potential Participant:

I am writing to you to ask for your help in a study about the experience of living abroad for at least one year prior to age 18. This letter is being sent to you based on your interest in participating in this study.

Results of this study will help further the understanding of how the experience of living outside of the passport country influences people. This information will help to provide greater information about the characteristics of this group and the benefits and challenges that result from these experiences. This research will help to inform other research as well as mental health clinicians who are working with people who have lived abroad.

Participation in this study will involve:

- **Providing basic demographic information to ensure eligibility.**
- **One interview, lasting 1-2 hours.**
- **Review of interview transcriptions and summary of major points to ensure accuracy**

I encourage you to participate in this valuable study. Your responses will be completely confidential. Any information that you complete will be identified by initials only. All information will be locked in a file cabinet in the researcher's office. If you decide to participate in this study, you will receive a document that more fully explains the study and will provide a section for you to indicate your consent to participate in the research study. However, you may choose not to participate at any time during the study.

If you have any questions about the study that would help your decision, please feel free to contact me at edsellers@bsu.edu or call me at (765) 602-1602.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this important project.

Sincerely,

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Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Initials: _____

1. **Gender:** Male Female
2. **Current Age:** _____
3. **Passport nationality(ies):** _____
4. **Please list the countries/cultures lived in prior to age 18:**

a. _____	g. _____
b. _____	h. _____
c. _____	i. _____
d. _____	j. _____
e. _____	k. _____
f. _____	l. _____
5. **How old were you when you moved to each of the host country(ies) listed above?**

a. _____	g. _____
b. _____	h. _____
c. _____	i. _____
d. _____	j. _____
e. _____	k. _____
f. _____	l. _____
6. **How many years (total) did you live abroad prior to age 18?** _____
7. **Please list your parents'/guardians' passport country(ies):**

8. **Length of time since returning from host country:** _____
9. **Languages you speak fluently:** _____
10. **Please indicate the reason for moving abroad:**

_____ Religious
_____ Education
_____ Military
_____ Governmental
_____ Business
_____ Other (please specify): _____

11. What type of school did you attend?☐ National☐ International☐ Boarding☐ Other (please specify): _____**12. Please indicate your race: _____**

Appendix D

Informed Consent

Study Title Exploration of Themes Evolving from the Experiences of People Who Have Lived Outside of Their Parents' Passport Country for a Significant Amount of Time During Adolescence

Study Purpose and Rationale

This research study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by examining the experience of people who have lived outside of their parents' passport country for a significant amount of time during adolescence and the effect that this has after returning from living abroad on a variety of life areas including social, academic and career, cultural, and psychological areas.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

In order to participate in this study, you must be at least 19 years of age, have lived in a country different than the home or passport country of your parents for at least one year, and have returned to the home or passport country of your parents for at least one year after having lived abroad. You must be fluent in English and be able to complete the study by telephone.

Participation Procedures and Duration

For this research study, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire by telephone to verify your eligibility for participation which should take approximately 5-10 minutes. After your eligibility has been verified, you will be asked to participate in a telephone interview. The telephone interview will take between approximately 1-2 hours and will ask about your experiences living abroad and how this has affected other areas of your life. Your interview will then be transcribed and analyzed. After your interview transcripts have been evaluated, they will be sent back to you for you to verify the accuracy of the transcript and the analysis of the transcript.

Audio or Video Recordings

For purposes of accuracy, with your permission, the interviews will be audio recorded; however, if you do not want to be audio recorded, you will not be allowed to participate in this research study. Any names used on the audio recordings will be changed to initials when the recordings are transcribed. The recordings will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for one year after completion of data collection and will then be destroyed.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

All data will be maintained as confidential and no identifying information such as names will appear in any publication or presentation of the data.

Storage of Data

Paper data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for three years and will then be shredded. The data will also be entered into a software program and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only members of the research team will have access to the data.

Risks or Discomforts

The only anticipated risk from participating in this study is that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may quit the study at any time.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

Should you experience any feelings of anxiety, please contact your local community mental health provider.

Benefits

One benefit you may gain from participating in this study may be a better understanding of how living abroad has impacted your life. You will also be helping to inform the professional community about your experience and the impacts that result from living abroad for a significant portion of your developmental years.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact Research Compliance, Office of Academic Research and Sponsored Programs, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070, irb@bsu.edu.

Study Title Exploration of Themes Evolving from the Experiences of People Who Have Lived Outside of Their Parents' Passport Country for a Significant Amount of Time During Adolescence

Consent

I, _____, agree to participate in this research project entitled, "Exploration of Themes Evolving from the Experiences of People Who Have Lived Outside of Their Parents' Passport Country for a Significant Amount of Time During Adolescence." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate. I understand that I will receive a copy of this informed consent form to keep for future reference.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

Participant's Signature

**

Date

**Typing your name on the above line will be your electronic signature which acknowledges your consent to participate in this research study

Researcher Contact Information

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Appendix E

Coders Research Team Training



1.




Coding Training

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4.

Making the text manageable-Step 2

- ✦ Keep research concern in mind as you read through
 - ✦ Select relevant text
 - Passages of text that express a distinct idea related to research concern
 - ✦ Memo
 - Why is it important, thoughts stimulated, etc.



2.

Introductions & Purpose

- ✦ Your job is to find a connection between their concerns and ours-to create an abstract bridge to link the two
 - ✦ Their concerns take center stage
 - ✦ We are looking for theory
 - A description of a pattern that you find in the data (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003)
- ✦ Must be able to support your interpretation



5.

Making the text manageable-Process

- ✦ 1. Explicitly state your research concern and theoretical framework
 - ✦ What you want to learn about and why
 - ✦ Set of beliefs about processes with which you approach the research study
- ✦ 2. Select relevant text for further analysis
 - ✦ Passages of transcripts that express a distinct idea related to your research concerns.



3.

How do we do it? Grounded Theory says:

- ✦ Research concerns
- ✦ Raw text
- ✦ Relevant text
- ✦ Repeating ideas (same/similar words & phrases)
- ✦ Themes (implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas)
- ✦ Theoretical constructs (abstract grouping)

6.

Making the text manageable-Process

- ✦ 2. Select relevant text for further analysis
 - ✦ Highlight and underline the relevant passages
 - ✦ Copy all the underlined passages into a separate file, one for each individual.
 - ✦ Include a header that lists the participant, date the file was created, and who did the selection
 - ✦ For each relevant text portion include speaker and transcript page number
 - ✦ Each coder independently creates files selecting relevant text

7.



Making the text manageable-Process

- ✦ How to determine if the passage is relevant
 - ▣ Does it relate to your research concern?
 - ▣ Does it help you understand your participants better?
 - ▣ Does it clarify your thinking?
 - ▣ Does it simply seem important, even if you can't say why?

10.



Repeating Ideas-Process

- ✦ 1. Open the file with the relevant text for the first individual. Create a new document that will become the list of repeating ideas.
- ✦ 2. Highlight the first selection of relevant text from the original file and copy it into the new document. This is called your starter text.

8.



Making the text manageable-Process

- ✦ You can select the text and put it in a new file
- or-
- ✦ You can select the text and put it in a new file with your thoughts about why you selected the passage

Either is fine. It depends on your style and what you find helpful for the next stage.

11.



Repeating Ideas-Process

- ✦ 2. Starter text
 - ▣ A. Read through the entire list of relevant text selections, keeping the starter text in mind
 - ▣ B. When you find an idea that seems related to the starter text, highlight and copy it to the new repeating ideas document. Make note of how the two selections of text seem related.
 - ▣ C. Read through the entire list of relevant text until you have highlighted and moved all the relevant text related to the starter.
 - ▣ D. Return to the original list of relevant text. Highlight and move the first selection that you did not group with the original starter text. This is your next starter idea. Continue with the process as noted above. Continue until you have grouped together as many of your relevant text selections as possible into the repeating ideas file.

9.



Repeating Ideas-Step 3

- ✦ A repeating idea is an idea expressed in relevant text by two or more research participants
- ✦ These are the building blocks
- ✦ Done first in individual transcripts
- ✦ Then combined from all the transcripts

12.



Repeating Ideas-Challenges

- ✦ Orphans-non-repeated text segments
 - ▣ Discard as unimportant
 - ▣ Search transcript again to find something that goes with the solitary text
 - ▣ It is important on its own
- ✦ Too broad- can still see fine distinctions between items
 - ▣ Break into smaller groups
- ✦ Too narrow-groups are too small
 - ▣ Merge two smaller groups into a larger one
- ✦ Second thoughts-Thought it belonged in one place, but now think it belongs somewhere else
 - ▣ Make the change

13.



Repeating Ideas

- ✦ 3. Primary investigator (PI) will review and make a master list based off of all participants to be reviewed; discussed with all coders
 - ▣ Sort into a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 80 repeating idea clusters
 - ▣ May not all agree, but must see rationale
 - ▣ Organization needs to be TRANSPARENT
 - Reorganize as needed
- ✦ 4. Name repeating ideas

16.



Themes-Process

- ✦ 1. Open master list of repeating ideas; Create new file that will be the themes
- ✦ 2. Begin with the starter idea and read through the list with it in mind. Copy related ideas in to theme file. Make a note of how they are related. Continue until you have selected and copied all repeating ideas similar to the starter idea.
 - ▣ Orphans-delete, incorporate, or go back to raw text and reevaluate
- ✦ 3. Name themes
- ✦ 4. Check your work with a consultant

14.



Repeating Ideas

- ✦ This is the most difficult and labor-intensive part of the coding process
- ✦ You will have immersed yourself in the text which is essential for further coding

17.



Theoretical Constructs-Step 5

- ✦ The theoretical construct does not simply re-describe the themes, more abstract understanding

15.



Themes-Step 4

- ✦ Organize repeating ideas into larger groups that express a common theme
 - ▣ Group as many as possible
 - Aim to reduce repeating ideas by a factor of 3 or 4
 - Approximately 10-20 themes in end

18.



Theoretical Constructs: The process

- ✦ 1. Create a new file for theoretical constructs
- ✦ 2. Copy the first theme into the new file. Read through the remaining themes to find related themes. Each time you identify one that is related, copy it to the new file, and make a note of why and how the theme fits with the starter theme.
 - ▣ These notes provide clues to the organizing principle

19.



Theoretical Constructs: The process

- ✦ 3. Name the theoretical constructs
 - ▣ Use literature and general knowledge to explain (*use language of the theory from which you draw*)
- ✦ 4. Verify work with consultants (professional), make changes based on feedback

20.



Theoretical Narrative (Done by PI only)

- ✦ This is done by retelling the participants stories in terms of theoretical constructs, and helps the text to come alive.
- ▣ 1. Describe research concerns
- ▣ 2. Describe 1st theoretical construct
 - Break down into thematic components and use the language of repeating ideas
- ▣ 3. Complete for all constructs

21.



Other important notes:

- ✦ Please date all work, memos, etc
- ✦ Back up your work, or send it to me to be backed-up